YOUR GUIDE TO VIDEO COMPUTER GAMES

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FIRST ANNUAL

1983 SOFTWARE ENCYCLOPEDIA

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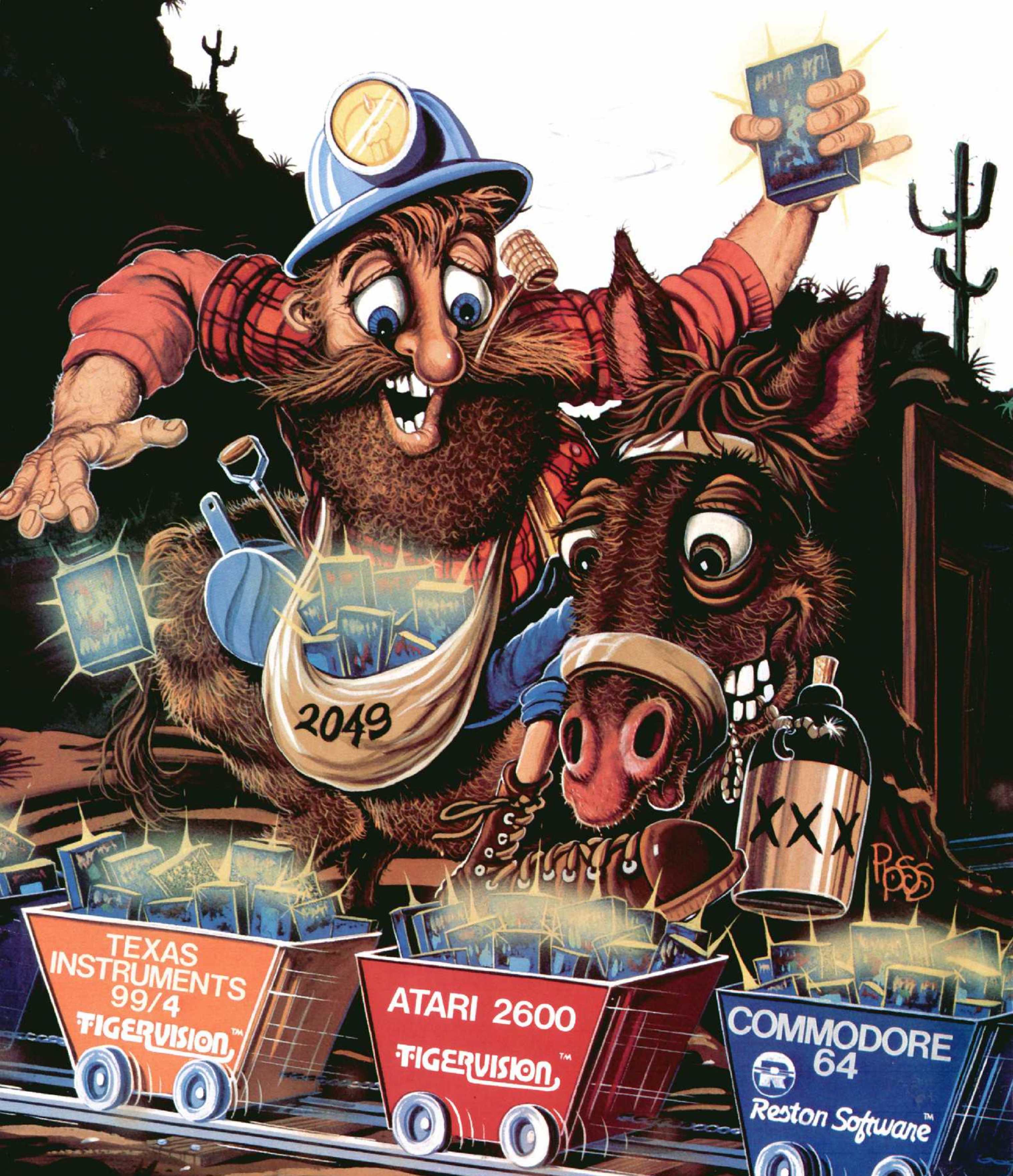

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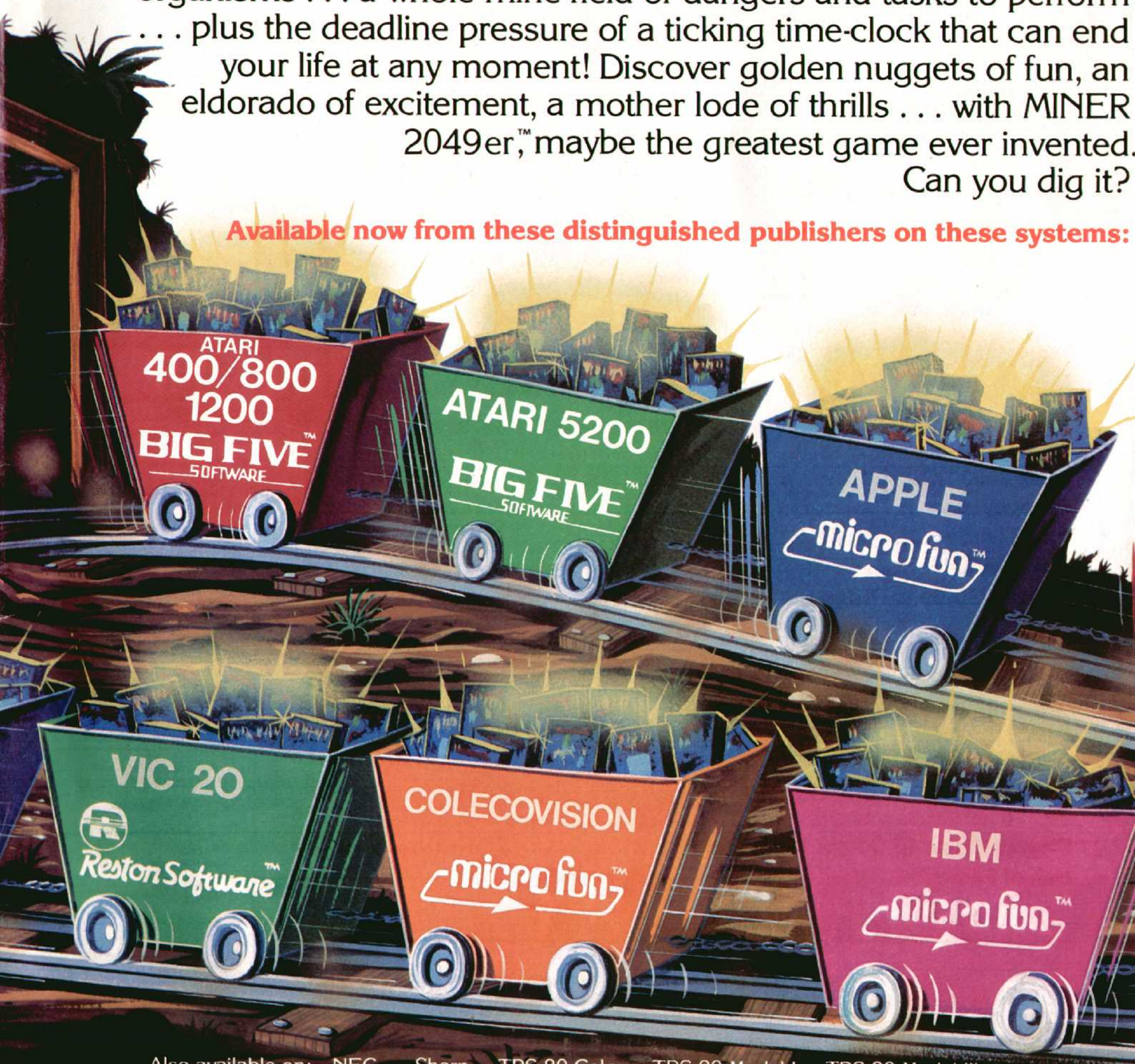
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INTRODUCING...

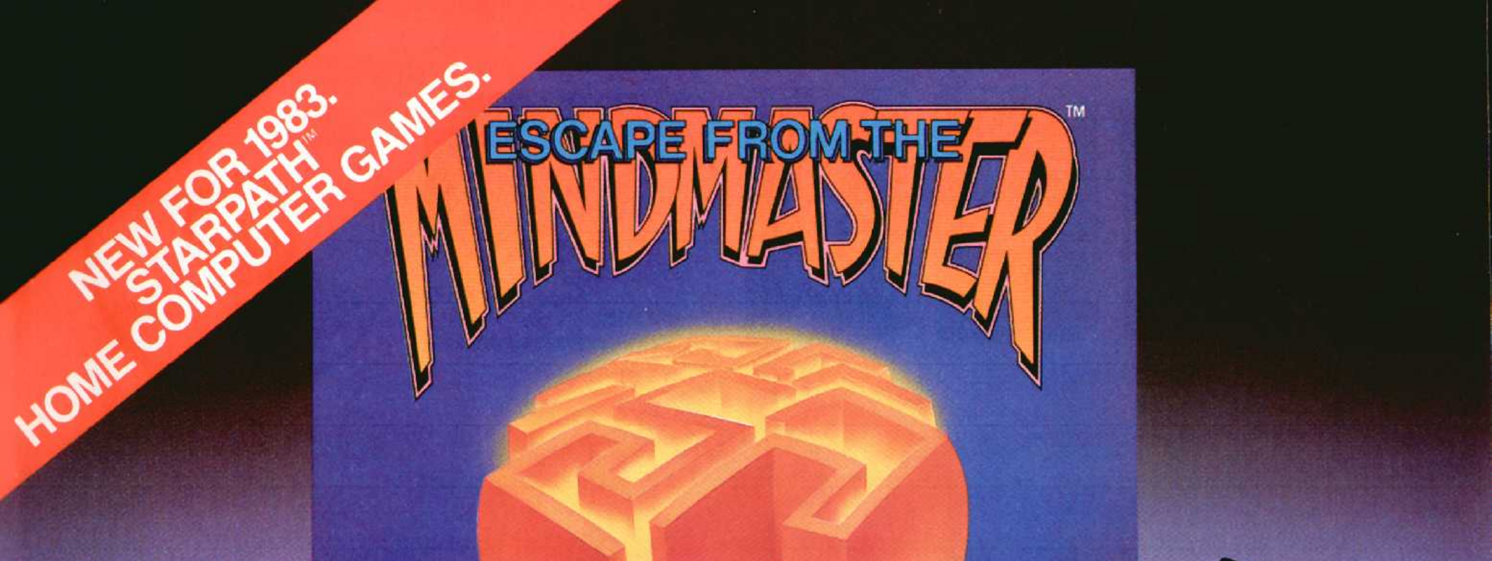
THE ELECTRONIC GAMES SOFTWARE ENCYCLOPEDIA
FIRST EDITION

A Brief Message from the Editors

You're now holding concrete proof of how fast the electronic gaming hobby has grown since its birth in 1972. The *Electronic Games Software Encyclopedia* is a first-of-its-kind catalog of available videogame and computer entertainment software.

This first edition of the encyclopedia describes and rates more than 500 games, but it's already clear that we've only taken the first step. In acquiring sample games for write-ups in this volume, our editors became aware of more videogames and computer games than anyone might have guessed existed. We are following all of these leads, and the forthcoming second edition will, therefore, benefit mightily from this all-out search.

Then, too, the growth-rate is accelerating, particularly in the computer area. Not only are publishers pumping out more and more games, but there are new hardware systems — each with its own library of software — that seem to be making their debut every day. Several computers that were too new to be included this time will almost certainly be added to the listings of the next edition. Instead of the current 10-system encyclopedia, we may all soon be thumbing through a volume that covers up to twice that number of machines.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TODAY'S VIDE

An Overview of the Six Most Popular Machines

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

Technological innovation has become the rule rather than the exception in the dozen years since Magnavox unveiled the first programmable system for playing games using a television screen. A breakthrough in its day, the Odyssey unit appears crude by modern standards, because the industry has made the transition to computer-like game-playing machines in virtually nothing flat.

The units that dominate videogaming in 1983 can be divided into three general categories: standard systems, senior systems and third-wave systems. The main criteria for establishing these divisions are the amount of resident memory (as measured in units called "bytes"), graphics resolution and the amount of screen RAM (used for moving objects around on the display). The senior programmables have more than all three of the standard machines, and the third-wave systems exceed the senior set-ups.

That said, let's go on to discuss each of the six machines for which there are software listings in this premiere edition of the *Electronic Games Software Encyclopedia.*

The Atari 2600, sometimes known as the VCS (Video Computer System), is the most widely distributed home arcade machine in the world. More people own this standard programmable than all other makes combined. Though it is far from the most sophisticated game-player on the market, the 2600 holds its position of dominance primarily due to its enormous library of software. Thanks to the influx of independent publishers, the owner of an Atari 2600 (or the compatible Sears Tele-Arcade) can choose from among hundreds of cartridges of every possible description.

The games for the 2600 are characterized by low resolution graphics, a small number of simultaneously-moving objects on the screen and excellent play-action. The system comes equipped with detachable joysticks and paddles, and there are at least three other special-purpose controllers obtainable from Atari, so it is usually possible for a designer to match a program with the command device most suitable for it.

The Odyssey^2 is, like the Atari 2600, a standard programmable. Its console sports non-detachable joysticks and a monoplanar keyboard. The latter is employed in selecting the desired game variation, making use of the "high-score" capability of some O^2 cartridges like *UFO* and the board-game/videogame hybrids of the *Master Strategy Series*.

The Voice of Odyssey's speech synthesis module is a peripheral that enables some cartridges for this machine to become very chatty, indeed. The voice games are playable without the add-on, but obviously, they're more fun with it.

An updated version of the system, dubbed the Odyssey^3, will enter national distribution this summer. All cartridges designed for the O^2 will operate properly in the updated model and vice versa. Among the advantages of the new system are its real keyboard, its ability to be connected via a modem to services such as CompuServe and The Source, it incorporates a newly-designed joystick that's easier for lefties to wield, and makes use of a small voice module that's able to send the sound through the television's speaker.

The Astrocade began its existence as the Bally Professional Arcade back in 1977, but it is very much up-to-date in most ways. Astrocade, Inc., took over production of hardware and software nearly two years ago, but the new owners haven't yet restored the brand to full, robust health.

Still, Astrocade marketed several excellent new cartridges in 1982 and hopes to further increase the size of the game library in the current year. Also on tap is a keyboard which, when used in conjunction with the *Astro BASIC* programming cartridge, gives the unit many of the capabilities of a personal computer.

The second-most-popular videogame system is the Intellivision, introduced by Mattel as a senior programmable in 1980. The Intellivision impresses

GAME SYSTEMS

just about everyone with its exceptional graphics, though pokey play-action is a defect in the eyes of many.

The controllers are, at once, both a strength and a weakness. The keypad portion allows for a more sophisticated approach to player input, but the direction disk makes on-screen objects hard to control in games that require sudden sharp turns. On the other hand, the Intellivision sports library is second to none in quality. The adventure game line, beginning with *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, also shows considerable promise.

Currently, Mattel is manufacturing a revamped version of the Intellivision called the "Intellivision II". It is fully compatible with the original device, though improvements in technology make it possible for Mattel to offer the II at a far lower retail price than the first Intellivision.

The Intellivison is one of only two systems for which there is a speech synthesis unit. The company is presently rolling out a line of cartridges that take advantage of the Intellivoice's ability to mimic human speech.

The "third-wave" videogames are, in effect, a bridge between the videogame as we know it today and the computer-oriented home gaming center many of us will own tomorrow. Both Coleco's ColecoVision and Atari's 5200 are essentially computers without keyboards as they now stand.

The ColecoVision, which made its debut during late 1982, is the current odds-on choice to emerge as the most popular videogame of the mid-1980's. The installed base of ownership has already passed 600,000 and could easily be three times that size by the time 1983's Christmas season rolls around.

Software for the ColecoVision is still a trifle skimpy. There are fewer than a dozen cartridges on the market, and it will be at least a few more months before games produced by third-party manufacturers will start appearing in appreciable numbers. The current line-up heavily emphasizes home translations of coin-op games, although the new schedule of upcoming cartridges encompasses sports and adventure contests as well.

Modules are very important in the ColecoVision scheme of things. The first three are: an emulator that allows play of cartridges designed for use on the Atari 2600, a steering wheel and gas pedal controller for *Turbo*, and a memory expansion. Forthcoming modules include an emulator for the Intellivison and an outfit that turns the present ColecoVision into a powerful microcomputer for a total outlay of less than $400.

The avowed purpose of the Atari 5200 is to present arcade-quality videogames on the family television set. The first batch of cartridges includes home editions of such coin-op winners as *Space Invaders, Missile Command, Galaxian, Defender* and *Centipede*. The line will soon be broadened with sports and, probably, adventure titles, and more than one independent software publisher has expressed interest in producing software for it in the future.

Non-compatibility is the biggest rap against this system, which generally sells for $210-$230 (about $30 more than ColecoVision on the average). This even includes things such as joysticks and the "TV/Game" switch box which the owner must affix to the side of the TV set. This means that multiple system gamers will end up having such gizmos stuck to the sides of their TVs, a messy and unfortunate state of affairs.

On the up side, the 5200's games are at least on the level of those playable on the leading microcomputers. They all feature excellent visuals and fluid play-action, marred only by the lack of precision of the Atari 5200 joystick.

Promised modules will greatly extend the range of the 5200. The first one definitely planned is an emulator that permits 5200 systems to play cartridges designed for the 2600.

ASTROCADE

AMAZING MAZE

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

A playfield rendered to resemble a castle consists of a labyrinth through which a pair of cursors race in search of the exit. Most of the game's factors are programmed before play, and the first contestant to get out of the maze first a predetermined number of times is declared the winner.

It's more a puzzle than a game with randomly-generated mazes drawn for each new contest.

ASTRO BATTLE

Astrocade
Astrovision
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 7

Owing to its status as the last arcade supersmash not legally protected from "alternate versions" in the home market, though Atari did phenomenally well with their official VCS and 400/800 adaptations, virtually every computer or videogame system in existence has a *Space Invaders* clone.

Astro Battle equips gamers with the traditional horizontally-maneuverable laser cannon, four shoot-away bunkers and eight columns of invaders each four deep. The aliens sweep back and forth across the playfield, dropping down a notch with each complete pass.

The invaders drop bombs, which must be evaded or destroyed, and the object of the contest is to obliterate the entire squadron of on-screen aliens without losing the preprogrammed number of bases.

Bonus points are awarded for taking out a mystery ship that periodically saunters along the top of the screen.

ASTROCADE PINBALL (Formerly BALLY PIN)

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Pinball
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

A duel board with different features on each screen, flippers — controlled by gripping both Astrocade pistol-type joystick/paddles — and even drop targets.

The ball moves realistically and the simulation is true. There is a white-background board and a more visually intriguing night-black version with the bumpers and targets glowing against the darkness.

Balls are launched by flicking the joystick-controller nob with the thumb.

BRICKYARD

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Ball and Paddle
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Brickyard is an early home adaptation of the *Breakout*-style contest in which a preprogrammed number of balls are deflected by means of a horizontally-controllable paddle/bat up toward rows of multicolored bricks.

The object of the game is to blast a ball up through either the left or right side of the playfield, causing it to run amuck, bouncing wildly between the top remaining rows and the playfield ceiling.

A round ends when either all the balls have been exhausted or a field is totally cleared, in which case a new brickyard appears for the gamer to punch away at with his remaining stock of balls. (*Note: shares cartridge with Clowns*)

CLOWNS

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 8

Clowns takes the traditional *Breakout*-style game and transforms the paddle into a teeter-totter and the "ball" into a clown. As the game begins, a harlequin dances out onto the ledge at either the right or left of the playfield and swoops into the air. Located somewhere along the base of the field, under the gamer's control, is a seesaw with an inert clown standing on the down end.

Using the fulcrum as a guidepost, the landing clown will send his partner into the air at the desired angle (the closer the flying clown comes to the center of the teeter-totter, the closer his opposite number's flight path comes to 45 degrees). The clown so launched must then make contact with, thereby bursting, three rows of multicolored balloons.

The action is accompanied by caliope carnival music.

DODGE 'EM

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Driving
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

Standard overview-perspective driving game with speedometer at base of the playfield. The object is to keep moving, gain mileage and avoid collisions with other vehicles in this vertically moving race game.

Contact with another car not only slows down your vehicle, but brings a computer-lettered "BOOM" on-screen, in type slightly larger than is used in most newspapers to indicate that their country is at war.

An early version of a classic driving videogame type. (*Note: shares a cartridge with* 280 *Zzzap*)

DOG PATCH

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Poor
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 3

Two armed cowboys face each other across the base of a white-backdropped playfield. Arms and pistol angles are determined utilizing the paddle operation on the

Astrocade's hybrid controller, with a centrally located figure tossing a tin can into the air at timed intervals. Both players fire at the can, scoring points for each hit.

Bonus points can be scored by keeping the can in the air with a volley of shots.

FOOTBALL

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports Simulation
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Full-blown recreation of gridiron thrills in this horizontally-scrolling football simulation.

Offensive team captains control the quarterback, who's able to run at anytime and/or pass according to the play previously selected from the menu that appears before each play.

Continuing status update with two difficulty levels. Defensive players have direct control over their middle linebacker.

GALACTIC INVASION

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 7

Galaxian by any other name, if well programmed, will play just as neatly. In fact, early editions of this cartridge are actually called *Galaxian* on the menu, and no attempt is made to disguise the fact.

This contest is the successor to *Space Invaders*. An early success from the Japanese design company Namco (who later created *Pac-Man*), Midway licensed *Galaxian* in the U.S. arcades to replace the venerable original invasion game.

Galaxian offered bored SI-sharpshooters a new wrinkle: the aliens were not just bomb-dropping sitting ducks, waiting quietly in space to be blasted to atoms. The invaders were now more sophisticated and small squadrons of aliens periodically would peel off from the pack and streak at the player's cannon. *Galactic Invasion* offers a near duplicate of the coin-op original.

GAMBLING CARTRIDGE (Blackjack, Poker and Acey-Deucey)

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 2-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 6.5

Three video simulations of popular gambling contests are provided on this single cartridge with video versions of blackjack, poker and acey-deucey presented.

Cards are dealt by the computer and are presented in full color. Using the extra controller slots optional on the Astrocade will allow up to four participants at a time to get in on the action.

GRAND PRIX

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Race
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 5

An early version of the two-player dual car race in which players skid around a non-scrolling track for a pre-programmed number of laps.

The joystick is used to determine direction with the paddle function controlling speed. The track is a brown, dusty color, surrounded by a grreen field with the clock at top-center screen.

PANZER ATTACK

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 5

One of the original genre of videogame, the tank battle is presented in an impressive early format. Players use their joysticks to maneuver their tanks around a block-filled playfield in an effort to make the most hits upon their foe.

Point scores and numerous other factors can be pre-programmed via the console keypad. ((*Note*: *shares a cartridge with Red Baron*).

RED BARON

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 8

Using the Astrocade's joystick operation to control pitches and dives with the paddle directing the speed, two players take to the air for a blast-up head-to-head dogfight. The scenario periodically changes, moving clouds — behind which the planes cannot be seen — and towers (serving as obstacles), as the two gamers control their machine-gun firing biplanes through barrel rolls, loop-de-loops and a pitches air battle. (*Note: shares cartridge with Panzer Attack*).

SEAWOLF/MISSILE

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

These two contests are standard target-war games. *Seawolf* lets a pair of gamers patrol enemy-infested waters in submarines, firing vertical torpedos at the ships cruising the sea-lanes above while avoiding the depth charges that are constantly being launched. Sound effects include the beeping of sonar soundings and metal clanging to attain remarkable authenticity.

Missile pits two gamers armed with horizontally-mobile cannons, each of which can span half the base of the playfield, in a fight to gain the most points within a predetermined time limit by shooting down the planes passing by overhead.

SPACE FORTESSS

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 7

Based on the Midway coin-op, *Space Zap*, and translated by one of the original creators, Bob Ogdon, for Astrocade, *Space Fortress* places the arcader in charge of a centrally positioned defensive system. Alien foes breach the playfield from all four compass directions and the joystick must be pointed in the appropriate direction, and the cannon it controls must be fired before the oncoming projectile hits the fortress.

As game play continues, a wild card in the form of a UFO, begins zipping around the field, firing blasts as it sweeps through the surrounding airspace. The UFO — and all other forms of incoming fire — must be destroyed as the gamer wheels his cannon around ever more frenetically as the play-speed moves slowly from learning level to obliteration level.

The endurance test ends when the fortress is hit, igniting one of the most prolonged and bombastic explosions in videogame history.

STAR BATTLE

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

A very early version of the "trench" games in which the final assault on the Death Star from "Star Wars" is simulated by piloting a ship down a narrow corridor.

Here the player's ship must tackle randomly appearing enemy craft while attempting to ignore the distraction of a squeaky, unpleasant audio track.

Players are given a cockpit view and use a cross-cursor as an aiming device.

TENNIS, HOCKEY, HANDBALL

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports Simulation
Number of Players: 2-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

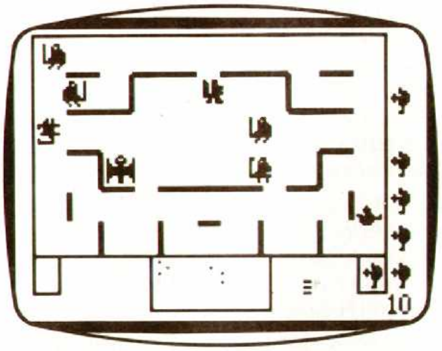
One of the most unique of the early sports videogames, these games are more than simple *Pong* contests in clever plastic disguises. Due to the unique nature of the controllers, the joystick is used for verticle and horizontal movement while the paddle function is assigned to deal with the remaining axis.

These are full court games that have held up quite well with four-player options for *Tennis* and *Hockey* and a two-gamer limit on *Handball*. (*Note: these games share a cartridge with Tornado Baseball*).

THE INCREDIBLE WIZARD

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 8



The original home version of the Nutting Associates'/Midway coin-op classic, *Wizard of Wor*, translated here by one of its original designers, Bob Ogdon.

Players can either oppose one another or work in tandem, moving space troopers through a deadly maze patrolled by several categories of beasties. Invisible monsters can be tracked by radar (on a screen located at the base of the playfield).

After each round, the Wizard's hatchetman appears for a brief battle. Destroy him and you'll face the Wizard himself in a life or death showdown.

As the racks continue, the maze becomes more and more open, with the "pit" the ultimate challenge — no maze at all!

TORNADO BASEBALL

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Tornado Baseball is an aptly-dubbed whirlwind version of the national pastime. Players trot onto the field and gamers take turns batting and playing the field.

The only real defense, however, is pitching skill as everything the team at bat hits is called instantly by the computer, flashing "single", "double", "out" or the occasional "homerun", determined by how hard the ball is hit and how well placed its destination is.

Lots of bells and whistles with music and animation. An early simulation. (*Note: shares a cartridge with Tennis, Hockey and Handball.*)

280 ZZZAP

Astrocade
Astrocade
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Steering
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

Early version of the first person perspective driving contest. Visible on the playfield is the blocky hood of your automobile, surrounded on both sides by swirling, curving guideposts. A speedometer is positioned at the center of the playfield base with the remaining time indicated on the left, and the mileage picked up notched on the right.

Periodically, the computer will give play tips, suggesting the driver shift gears, lower or higher, by means of the multi-function hybrid controller joystick. (*Note: shares a cartridge with Dodge 'Em*).

ATARI 5200

CENTIPEDE

Atari 5200
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $33.00
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Centipede brings "cute game" graphics to the invasion genre with magnificent results, particularly in this 5200 edition of the design that did so well for Atari as a coin-op. You have a cannon which can move back and forth across the bottom of the screen or vertically within the lower quarter of the display. Sinuous, multi-segment centipedes begin to wend their way down the screen between the rows of mushrooms. The goal is to blast the insects, segment by segment, while keeping clear of such added menaces as the pouncing spider which bounds across the screen periodically.

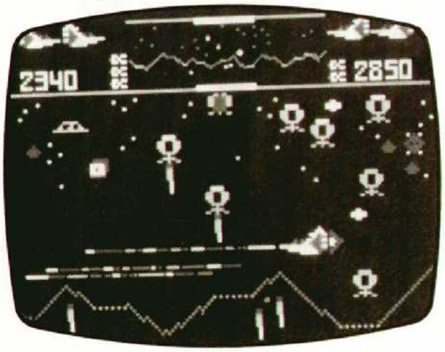
This is a faithful translation of the original, and *Centipede* partisans should be delighted by the home version's graphics and play-action.

DEFENDER

Atari 5200
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $33.00
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Williams' science fiction extravaganza ushered in a new era of all-out action when it hit the commercial game parlors, like a thunderbolt, a couple of years ago. The scrolling shoot-out genre has spawned many other titles since then, but *Defender* has justly earned a place as a "players" game.



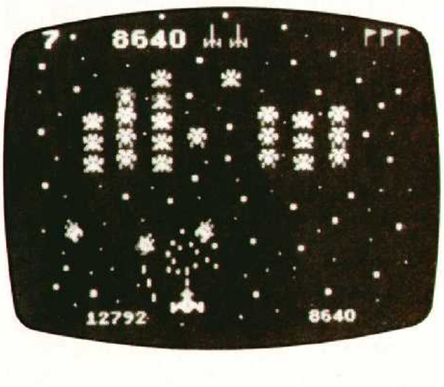
You command a highly-maneuverable spaceship that has free movement over the playfield. Your mission is to save the human survivors of a devastating attack, while battling whatever aliens that seek to prevent you from completing this mercy mission. Your ship sports two major weapons: there's a nose-mounted laser cannon for ordinary flights and a limited number of "smart bombs" that can wipe the screen clear of opposition in a single blow.

GALAXIAN

Atari 5200
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $33.00
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Unlike the other titles in Atari's first batch of cartridges for its 5200, *Galaxian* had never before been available for any other Atari game-playing system. Although the program has much to recommend, this *Galaxian* just doesn't create the same ambiance as the Midway pay-for-play arcade machine. When the winged creatures break out of their formation, they chug on down the playfield toward the gamer's cannon, instead of gracefully swooping as proper *Galaxian* nasties should.



Even so, *Galaxian* remains a refreshing sequel to *Space Invaders*. Getting rid of the lock-step formation that dominates *SI* boosts the excitement level of *Galaxian* (and more traditional looking) VCS version.

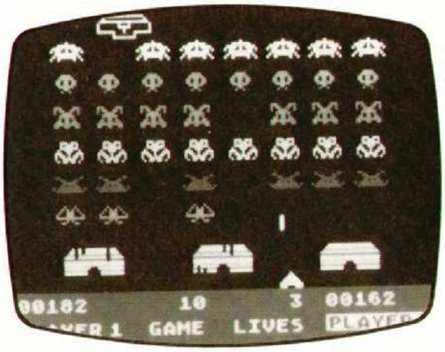
This one is best distinguished by a tall spaceship which is located on the left side of the playfield. If this craft, from which the tremendously, and makes it quite a bit more difficult to master.

SPACE INVADERS

Atari 5200
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $24.25
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Players and purists will possibly arrive at sharply divergent opinions of this cartridge. It certainly isn't the time-honored invasion game with its familiar visuals, yet the play-action is not too far from the Midway coin-op. Atari has justly elected to adapt its 400/800/1200XL *Space Invaders* program for this "third wave" system, rather than choosing to enhance the equally excellent aliens issue at the start of each round of play, touches the surface of the planet, the game ends immediately.

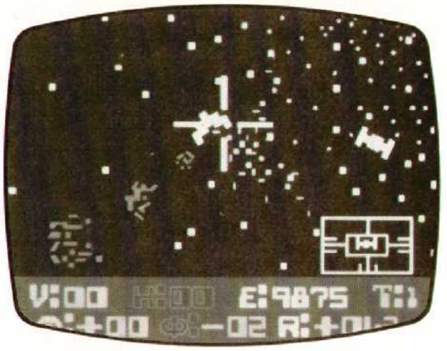


STAR RAIDERS

Atari 5200
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $28.50
Category: First-Person Piloting and Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

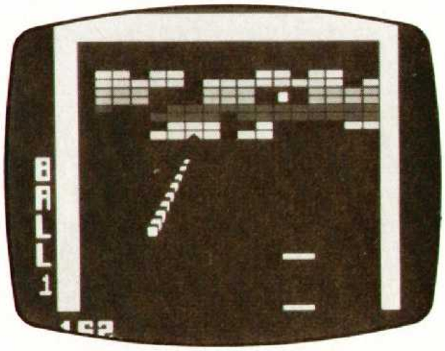
In the opinion of many, Atari's *Star Raiders* for its 400/800/1200XL personal computer systems is the single greatest video space contest of all time. Certainly, it represents the highest level yet attained by the "trek" type programs, in which the gamer is at the controls of a lone spaceship that must cruise throughout the galaxy destroying threatening aliens.



This 5200 edition is surely worthy of that illustrious reputation. It has most of the features, including the skillful blending of strategic and tactical aspects into an endlessly fascinating two-level simulation.

SUPER-BREAKOUT

Atari 5200
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $24.25
Category: Ball and Paddle
Number of Players: 1-2



Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Four different versions of the classic wall-bashing contest are included on this cartridge. Options include balls which begin the round, trapped inside the walls, walls that march down the playfield, double paddles and a somewhat souped-up version of the original *Breakout*.

The only real problem with this otherwise outstanding game results from the limitation of the Atari 5200 controller. It is simply too hard to get the paddle to cover the entire screen from edge to edge, because of the overly strong tension on the stick shaft. This causes many a ball to slip past the player's guard.

Other than that, the 5200 edition of *Super-Breakout* is generally similar to the one previously published for the Atari 400-800-1200.

ATARI 2600 (VCS)

ADVENTURE

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

As a gallant knight, you have been employed to return an enchanted chalice to a gold castle, encountering dragons, bats, bridges, keys, and other items along the way. Whether they be friend or foe will be determined throughout the course of play.

Adventure has three difficulty levels and there is no time limit or even a clock, for that matter — the quicker a quest is resolved, the less danger you'll be in! Once you've finally acquired that precious grail, head straight back to your point of origin, and be sure to watch out for Batty, who just loves to grab adventurers' prizes mere inches away from their homes!

AIRLOCK

Atari VCS
Data Age
Suggested Retail Price: $25.00
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Getting trapped aboard a sinking ship is bad, but getting caught inside a foundering submarine is an even more dire situation. Your goal in this somewhat unusual contest is to race along the corridors of the submarine, capture the key on each level that unlocks the airlock and then escape before time runs out. Creepy-crawlies roam the halls of the sub, and you must leap over them while keep moving toward your objective at a brisk pace or you're a good candidate to go down with your ship.

AIR-SEA BATTLE

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

One of the earliest cartridges offered for the Atari VCS, *Air-Sea Battle* became an instant classic, possibly because it was the first game ever to depart from the well-known ball and paddle concept.

Air-Sea Battle's numerous play-variations allow gamers to fire anti-aircraft guns, launch torpedoes, pilot jets and steer battleships — all within a basic "shooting gallery" format.

The program employs a horizontally-striped playfield, executed in pleasant shades of blue, across which targets move like ducks lined up in a row.

The gamer's ability to steer missiles accounts for this one's enjoyable play-action.

ARMOR AMBUSH

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $29.86
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

This cartridge might be called a cousin of the outstanding armor combat game Mattel has long offered for its Intellivision system. This is a two-player, head-to-head struggle fought on a computer-generated battlefield, that is randomly generated for each new round of play.

The visuals in *Armor Ambush* are very simple. For instance, buildings are generally rendered as simple blocks. The AFV's have a tendency to look bad in some movement positions, too. Nonetheless, the action has a high excitement quotient, and this is, after all, one of the few head-to-head contests produced for the 2600 system.

ASTEROIDS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $37.95
Category: Thrust-Fire
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

A realistic game in both concept and execution, *Asteroids* casts the gamer as the skipper of a spaceship. Besieged by meteors of various sizes, you must navigate your way through a deep space asteroid field and clear a sector of dangerous space debris. The craft can rotate a full 360 degrees and has a front-mounted laser cannon to chop up the moonlets.

By pushing the joystick forward, the arcader moves the ship in the direction in which its nose is pointing. For abrupt stops, just turn your ship around and apply thrust until forward momentum is negated.

The original *Asteroids* version uses a Quadrascan monitor that allows high-res images to be drawn anywhere on the screen. This permits the machine to vary the speed and direction of any oncoming space debris.

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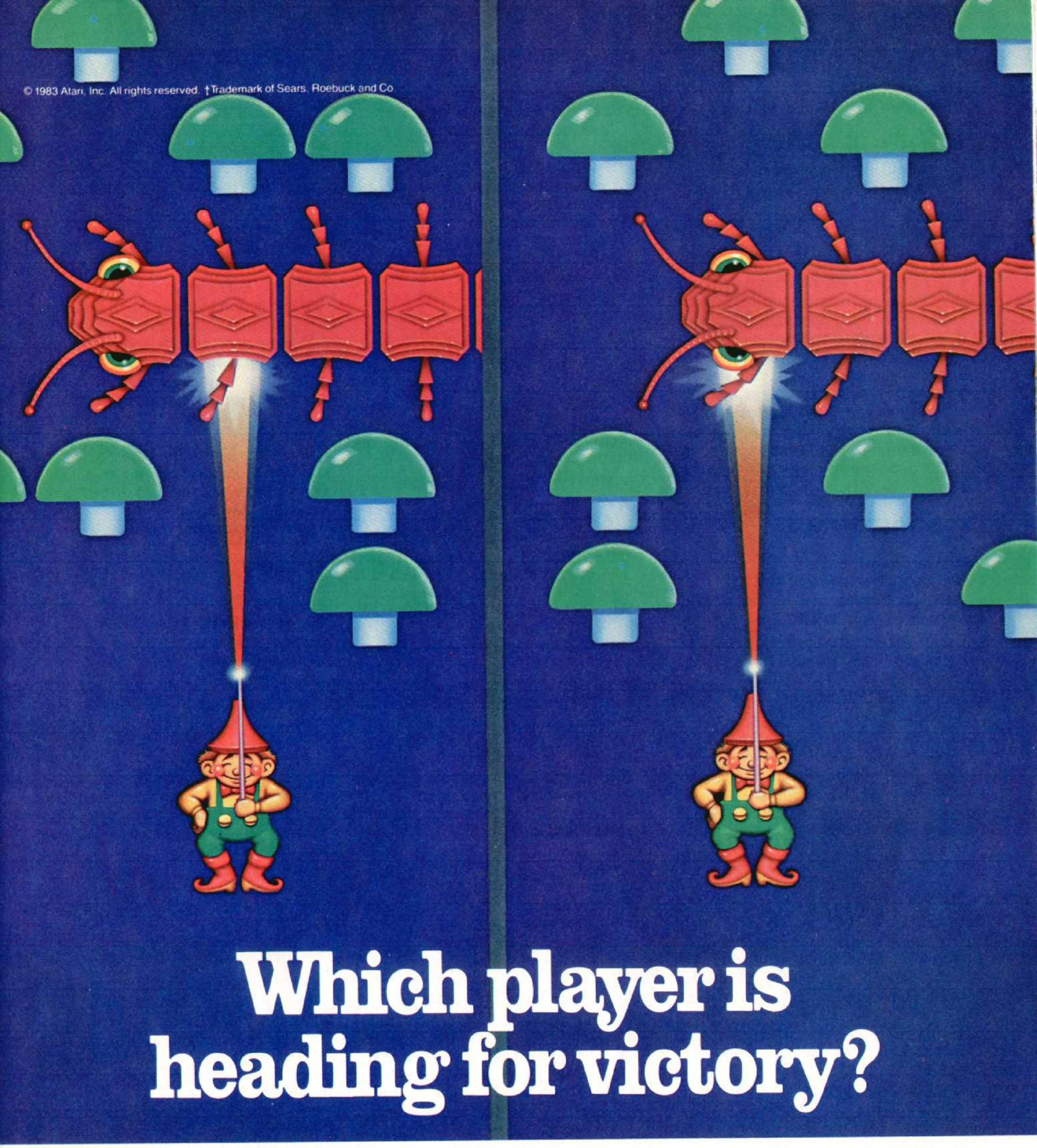
Which player is heading for victory?

Better find out. Here comes Centipede™ from Atari.

Look out. Centipede's escaping from the arcade. Grabbing every great arcade feature it can. And it's only from Atari, for use with the ATARI® 2600,™ Sears Video Arcade† systems, and the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem.

There's the same relentless attack of centipedes, scorpions, fleas, and spiders. A mushroom garden. Changing screen colors with each new centipede. And each new one gets faster. So points get tougher.

And if it's points you want, you can get 10 times more by shooting for the head. Like the player on the right. He's about to hit the head for 100 points. But the player on the left is about to hit a body segment for a measly 10 points. A cheap shot.

So don't let Centipede get away. That wouldn't be using your head.

ATARI®

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ATARI 2600
CENTIPEDE
RI 5200
PEDE

PROGRAMMABLES

ASTRO BLAST

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $29.86
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Astro Blast is the 2600-compatible edition of the game Intellivisionaries know as "Astro Smash". It combines elements of an invasion game with aspects of both missile defense programs and rock-blasting contests. The player steers a cannon back and forth across the bottom of the screen, blasting away at falling meteors, incoming missiles and enemy spaceships. The gimmick is that any object that hits the ground before the gamer can disintegrate it, actually subtracts from the player's running point total.

ATARI VCS FOOTBALL

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $20.20
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 5

One obstacle that sabotages what would otherwise be a most innovative approach to reproducing football action within the limitations of the VCS' memory — is that old devil, screen flicker! Movement of the players can be awfully hard to track when the clunky electronic athletes are swarming all over the field.

The cartridge's unique feature is that the goal lines are at the top and bottom of the screen instead of at the sides as found in other football videogames. This allows a full field to be displayed, without it having to be as small as it would if oriented conventionally on the screen.

ATLANTIS

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

This cartridge won a Certificate of Merit Award last year in the "Videogame of the Year" category, and it won't take most players more than a couple of rounds to understand why this city defense game has proven so popular. As the person in charge of repelling the airborne attack against the undersea metropolis, you command three weapons batteries, located at the center and side edges of the display. The attackers whiz across the screen, firing at your positions as you attempt to zap them into oblivion.

The main fun in this program is that you've got three firing positions from which to choose. The central gun shoots straight up, while the other two fire at 45-degree angles toward the center of the screen. Knowing which weapon to activate, accomplished by moving the joystick shaft in the desired direction while pushing the action button, often spells the difference between victory and defeat.

BARNSTORMING

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Steering
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The romantic days of biplanes and air show-stunt fliers is the inspiration for this airborne steering contest. The arcader is the pilot of a light plane which must fly over the windmills, through the open doors of the barns and avoid collisions with the flocks of geese with which your mechanical marvel shares the sky. Although the play-action is rather simple, excellent graphics and a thoroughly superior programming job by Steve Cartwright turns this into a solid cartridge that may pack especially strong appeal for younger home arcaders.

BASKETBALL

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $17.70
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Alan Miller conceived the idea for the first trapezoidal game playfield for *Basketball*, a strictly one-on-one action contest. Hitting the "game reset"switch causes the ball to be tossed into the air between the two opponents. The first one to reach the ball after the opening tap, can use the joystick to dribble into position for a good shot.

Atari's *Basketball* is also one of the few sports games that can be played solo. The computer-directed team's defense varies according to the closeness of the score. If the human-coached side trails, the computerized opponent roams the court aimlessly. But if the arcader's time ties or takes the lead, the computer-directed guard will begin battling the ball-handler every step of the way to the hoop.

BERZERK

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Maze Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Atari has produced a highly enjoyable version of *Berzerk* that packs all the spine-tingling action found in the Stern coin-op original. As in the arcade *Berzerk*, the player has a series of three on-screen representatives, available one at a time as the previous one is eliminated. A variable number of computer-controlled robots inhabit each room, constantly on the move — after the hero.

Berzerk is a relatively simple game, with a minimal number of elements to consider. Surprisingly, it does hold up well under repeated play, because there's so much variety from round to round.

BOWLING

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $17.70
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Bowling is a version of a sport that's perfectly suited to the home videogame format. This one offers players a long horizontal lane accompanied by a cartoon bowler that can be moved vertically for aiming shots.

Players can roll three kinds of balls; straight, curve, and steerable (the gamer controls the ball during its entire roll down the alley).

Complete, automatic on-screen scoring is one of the game's biggest attributes. The section at the top of the playfield not only shows the frame-by-frame line score, but also indicates whether the bowler has made a strike or spare in the tenth frame, where he's awarded the appropriate number of bonus rolls.

BOXING

Activision
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 8

The visual representation of the overhead view of the boxing ring is serviceable rather

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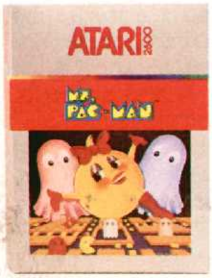
Which player is eating twice as much?

Think fast. Here comes MS. PAC-MAN* from Atari®

Meet the new home version of MS. PAC-MAN. She looks and plays so much like the arcade, she's unlike any home video game you've ever played before. And she's only from Atari for use with the ATARI® 2600,™ and the Sears Video Arcade† systems.

You get four ghosts. Four mazes. Escape tunnels. And lots of floating munchies. Pears to pretzels, apples to oranges. To get the top banana, worth 5000 points, you have to know your little lady backward and forward.



The way the player on the left does. He gets 1000 points for the apple. While the player on the right gets only half as much for the orange. But plenty of indigestion.

So escort MS. PAC-MAN out of the arcade.

Because this woman's place is in the home.

A Warner Communications Company.

than spectacular, but superb play-action easily redeems any shortfall in the area of graphics. A gamer moves his or her onscreen pugilist around the squared circle using the joystick, and throws punches by hitting the action button. The program automatically decides which hand the boxer will use to hurl the blow and whether it is to be a short jab or thudding body blow.

Each round takes two minutes of actual elapsed time, one-third shorter than in the actual sport. You won't miss that minute, however, since playing well requires so much energy and concentration that you'll be dying for a little rest by the time the round ends.

This is not a simulation, so if you're expecting a realistic representation of boxing, look elsewhere. But as a fast and furious arcade game, *Boxing* holds up well and is a lot of fun to play.

BREAKOUT

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

One ball and paddle game that has stood the test of time to become a true classic is *Breakout*. The object of the game is to manipulate a horizontally-mobile paddle across the bottom of the playfield in an attempt to hit the ball against seven rows of colored bricks near the top of the screen.

The ball removes a brick when they collide, and then bounces back toward the paddle. Five balls comprise each game.

Breakout is basically a game of motor skills and hand-eye coordination, in which gamers can score points by just keeping the bouncing ball bouncing long enough.

Also included on the game cartridge is *Breakthru*, a souped-up version of the classic paddle game. This time, the ball clears a path through the entire wall, bounces off the rear of the playfield and once again plows through the bricks on the return trip.

Though perhaps a bit less challenging than *Breakout*, *Breakthru* can be addicting and lots of fun for solo play, as well as head-to-head competition.

BRIDGE

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Getting four bridge-lovers together isn't always easy. That's where this solitaire bridge cartridge can really come in handy. The program is capable of dealing millions of different randomly distributed hands and provides the human participant with a partner who does a reasonably good job of bidding the hand.

BUGS

Atari VCS
Data Age
Suggested Retail Price: $27.86
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

After landing on a previously unexplored planet, you find your ship menaced by the local inhabitants; giant bugs which slide out of their nests in a bid to engulf your craft. The player uses the paddle to move an aiming cursor back and forth across the screen as the bugs edge down the display towards the ship. The cursor is the aiming device for the Ultrasonic weapon, the only thing capable of destroying the bugs.

The home arcader must also watch out for the dreaded phylax. This product of genetic engineering is capable of penetrating your ship's defenses and can only be destroyed if you can catch it in the path of your beam weapon.

CARNIVAL

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This electronic rendition of the traditional amusement arcade shooting gallery gives new meaning to the phrase "sitting duck". The ducks are no more dangerous than any other targets — which include clay pipes and rabbits — unless they reach the bottom row of the gallery and take wing. They then display an absolutely ravenous appetite for the bullets in your reserve ammunition supply, shown graphically along the bottom of the screen.

If you clear off all the targets, including the wheel of pipes, any extra shells can be expended during a bonus round in which you must repeatedly shoot at standing bears. Bonuses — and demerits — are also available on the regular playfield and are earned by hitting the visual representation of the bonus or penalty while it pops up briefly on the screen.

CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $12.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Championship Soccer is hardly the ultimate soccer simulation, but its relentless action, spare-yet-effective graphics, and myriad of unusual variations make it an outstanding team-sport cartridge.

Gamers choose among 56 various play modes, evenly divided between solitaire and two-player versions. The variables include goal size, team speed, and penalties. Joysticks are used to maneuver three players (a forward and two fullbacks) around a playfield that somewhat resembles an indoor soccer field.

CHECKERS

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Finding a worthy opponent for checkers isn't always easy, and that's exactly where this cartridge can come in mighty handy. It plays at three skill levels on an attractively rendered checkerboard with the pieces shown in three-quarter perspective. The computer opponent knows all the right moves and, at the most difficult skill setting, isn't a bit shy about making them.

CHOPPER COMMAND

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The action never lets up in this duo-directional scroller in which the player takes command of a heavily armored attack helicopter. Your mission requires you to guard the truck convoy moving on the ground below against air attack, and this turns out to be no easy task. The enemy seems to have won air superiority over the convoy's position, and the gamer will have to be quick with the stick to keep losses low.

Helping to spot the variety of opposing enemy aircraft is a secondary display

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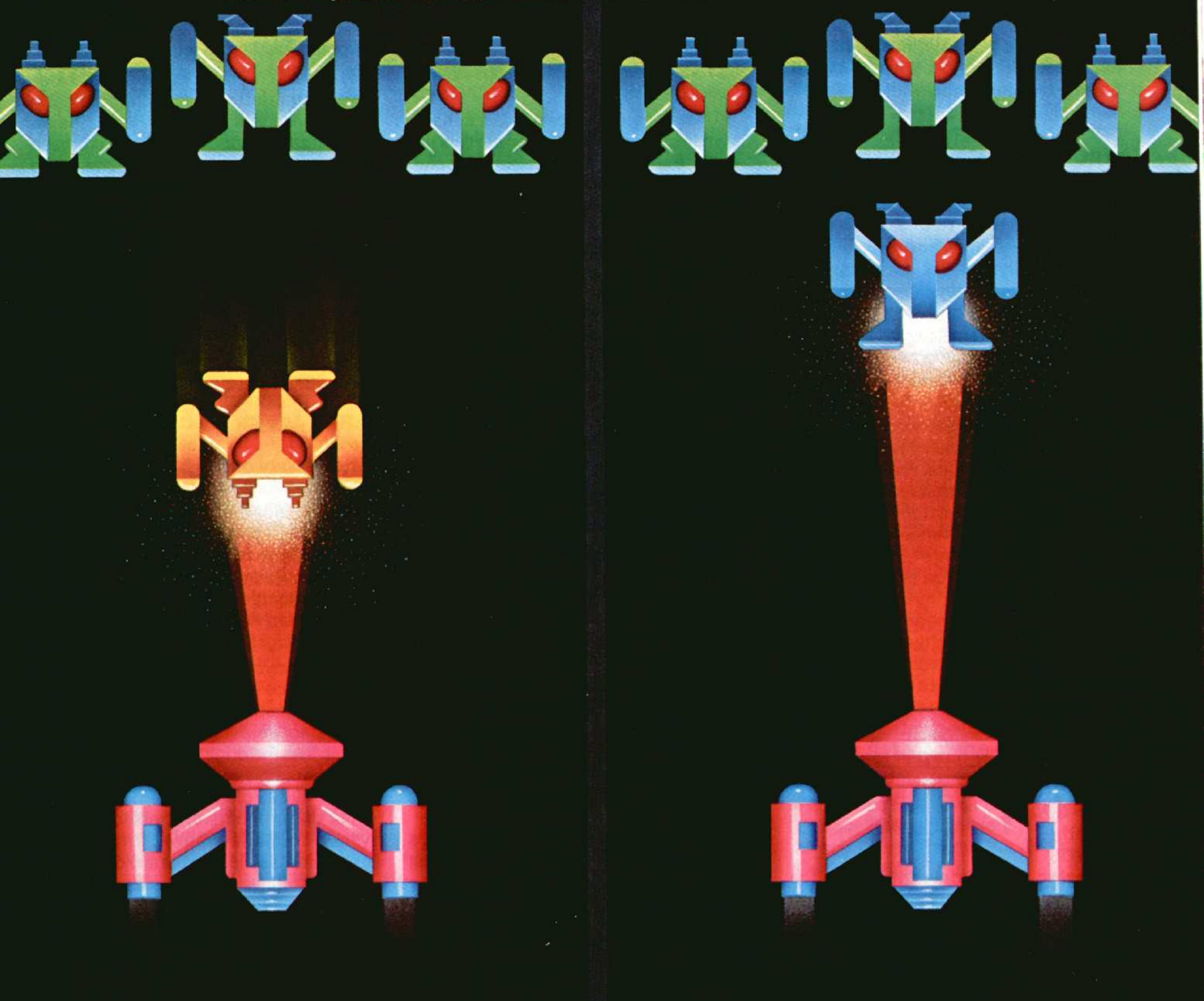

Which player is about to score with flying colors?

Better learn fast. Here comes Galaxian* from Atari.®

Pilot to co-pilot. Galaxian invaders are approaching your home. And they're only from Atari for use with the ATARI® 2600,™ Sears Video Arcade† systems, and the ATARI 5200™ SuperSystem.

These Galaxians look, sound, and act no different than the Galaxians you've battled in the arcade. They swoop, dodge, and fire with equal cunning. So you have to know your stuff.

ATARI
GALAXIAN
ATARI 5200

Like the player on the left. He's about to hit a flying yellow Flagship for 150 points. But his opponent, on the right, will score only 30 points for hitting the stationary blue Drone. Tough luck, rookie.

If you want to know even more about which Galaxians to hit, hit the stores for Galaxian.

ATARI
A Warner Communications Company.

located just below the main one toward the center of the screen. It is often possible to note the approach of rival planes and helicopters in time to line up devastating barrages before your whirlybird is ever seriously threatened.

CIRCUS ATARI

Atari VCS
Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $26.95
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is Atari's rendition of the game in which a clown hops up and down on a teeter-totter and tries to puncture rows of balloons, which float in horizontal rows about two-thirds of the way up the screen. The major option related to play-action controls when the rows reset. In one version, no balloons reset until all of them are exploded, while the other refills each row separately.

The action can get fairly frenetic, but the real key to the game is the ability to estimate the probable trajectory of the clown as it falls after puncturing some balloons. Once you learn to catch the acrobat a number of times in succession, the focus shifts to learning how to reduce the one-point row to expose the more valuable balloons just above.

COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE

Starpath
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-4 (Requires Supercharger)
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Humor is the secret ingredient in this invasion-style action game in which you must blast the advancing warriors out of the sky with your horizontally mobile cannon before they cruise down the screen and inflict the same fate on you. Still, once you've had a good chuckle over the title of this cartridge, there's still a fairly challenging contest of skill awaiting you.

There are several big plusses going for the player in this one. Not only do you get shields that can deflect incoming fire, but your penetrating and guided missiles are especially deadly. But then, so are those dastardly communist mutants...

COSMIC ARK

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This sequel to *Atlantis* is a stark departure from the first game in its series. This time, you are the captain of a star-spanning cosmic ark on a voyage of discovery. Your goal is to use a shuttle craft to get close enough to the surface of inhabited planets to beam up zoological specimens for the mighty ark.

Cosmic Ark is a two-scenario program. In the first, you must survive a violent meteor shower by shooting your weapons at the rocks as they fly toward you from all directions. If you survive this deadly space storm, your mothership establishes planetary orbit and you can send your scout craft in for a round of beast-catching. Unfortunately, you have to round up any likely looking creatures very rapidly, because your shuttle must return to the main ship when the warning, announcing another meteor storm, sounds.

COSMIC SWARM

Atari VCS
CommaVid
Suggested Retail Price: $24.90
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Get out the cosmic bug spray, the insects are on the warpath once again. You must use your weapon to kill off the nasty creatures before they hem in your joystick-prompted movement and destroy *you*. The most innovative aspect of the play mechanic is that each bug is constantly trying to move nesting blocks onto the playfield. These blocks are ordinarily impervious to your fire, but there is a way out of this tight spot. By shooting one of the giant bugs while it is carrying a nesting block in its enormous mandibles, all the blocks will instantly turn red to signify their vulnerable condition.

As long as the blocks remain red — they revert to green once you shoot an insect — it is possible to disintegrate them with your weapon. *Cosmic Swarm* constantly forces the arcader to choose between increasing freedom of movement by going after the red-hued nesting blocks and letting the insects become too firmly established on the playfield.

CROSS FORCE

Atari VCS
Spectravision
Suggested Retail Price: $21.86
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The evil Mirpods from the planet Tzoris have tyrannized the galaxy long enough. In this semi-sequel to *Planet Patrol*, the arcader has the opportunity to blast these creatures to their component atoms using a new super-weapon called the "spectron". In game terms, you have siting symbols at the top and bottom of the screen. Moving the joystick causes both to move in opposite directions at the same time. Hitting the action button releases an energy charge that destroys any enemy craft caught in its path. This novel play mechanic makes *Cross Force* an innovative — and highly entertaining — cartridge.

DARK CAVERN

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $34.86
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

In some ways *Dark Cavern* is even better than the excellent Intellivision cartridge which first inspired it, *Night Stalker*. The 2600-compatible version lacks a few of the graphic frills the original used to create an ambience of sinister suspense, but the play-action is still as pleasing.

Your on-screen hero, directed with the joystick controller, moves through the labyrinthine playfield, while avoiding some wandering nuisance monsters and, primarily, the relentless robot attackers. Opposition gets even stiffer as the game progresses, working up to a most challenging level of difficulty.

DEFENDER

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $37.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The bottom line on this VCS edition of the Williams' arcade hit, is that *Defender's* play-action is extremely close to the original. On this action contest, the player pilots the Defender spacecraft over an alien-ravaged landscape, blasting bombers, baiters, pods, swarmers, landers and mutants, that come whizzing your way.

The aliens swoop down to capture the survivors if the Defender doesn't obliterate them first. Once they have scooped up a human, you can blast the alien carrying him. In addition to unlimited laser fire, the player's ship has a trio of "smart bombs" to employ during each wave. To launch one, the Defender must drop down below the city's buildings and fire — blowing up every alien on the screen.

Defender makes magnificent use of sound effects. An entire range of them is used to signify such play elements as bonus ships being earned and the capture of a human.

DEMON ATTACK

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

The winner of the 1983 Arcade Award as "Best Videogame of the Year" is a multi-screen invasion contest in which the gamer manipulates a series of three cannons, available one at a time, in an effort to turn back the onslaught of as huge a variety of creatures as has ever been since on an Atari 2600-compatible cartridge. Unlike *Space Invaders*, which pioneered this category of videogames, *Demon Attack* puts very few enemies on the playfield at any one time, though the rapid cross-screen movement by the usual complement of four aliens is a good deal more troublesome than the highly predictable *SI* marching formation.

One of the signature features of *Demon Attack* is that some monsters, when shot, will subdivide into two smaller creatures. Both of these must then be destroyed by the arcader using the gun.

DODGE 'EM

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Dodge 'Em is an exciting game, whether it's played by one or two players. In the single-player mode, the arcader steers a car around a four-lane rectangular track filled with 80 dots. There's an opening, permitting lane switching on each face of the rectangle. When a car passes over a dot, it disappears and scores a point. By changing lanes periodically, the player can clear the board.

The obstacle to racking up points is a second, computer-controlled auto that zips around the track in the opposite direction. If the driver doesn't carefully maneuver his lane-to-lane movement, the crash car swerves in such a way as to make a head-on collision inevitable. A crash ends a round, with three rounds constituting a game.

DONKEY KONG

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

A giant gorilla has kidnapped your girl friend. As Mario the intrepid maintenance man-hero, you must use the ladders to climb from platform to platform in an effort to catch up with the adorably felonious simian. Once you make it to the top of the original playfield, the big ape grabs the girl and ascends to the top of a second screen full of action.

The gamer controls Mario using the joystick to move him along the platforms and up and down the ladders. To leap over gaps in the platform and to dodge flaming barrels and similar obstacles, Mario can jump into the air or even make a fair-sized leap for distance. Learning just when to press the action button, and how far to push the stick in the direction of the desired jump, must be mastered before the arcader can settle down for hours of fun with this home edition of the famous Nintendo coin-op.

DRAGONSTOMPER

Starpath
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $21.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1 (Requires Supercharger)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The quest for the Druidic Amulet and the sinister Dragon who now possesses this eldritch artifact is the unifying thread which runs through this three-part action adventure. The arcader, in the role of a noble warrior known as the Dragonstomper, must progress through the Enchanted Countryside, visit the Oppessed Village and ultimately fight it out with evil incarnate in the Dragon's cave.

Although it is possible to perform a wide range of actions in *Dragonstomper*, clever design makes it possible to enter all necessary commands through the joystick. Even better, an on-screen menu that summarizes all pertinent options cuts the need to memorize lots of instructions to a blessed minimum.

DRAGSTER

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Racing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 6

Can you make your drag racer streak down the measured mile in the shortest possible time without blowing the engine to smithereens? That's the challenge of *Dragster*, a one-or two-player contest that has always called forth opposite extremes of opinion from gamers. If you like this sort of thing, then you're going to absolutely love this cartridge. If trying to get gradiations of speed out of the action button/gas pedal sounds like an afternoon of frustration, you might want to take some other game out for a spin, instead.

The crux of the game is the on-screen tach. The idea is to keep the motor throbbing as close to the red line as possible, without crossing over into the danger zone and its attendant problems.

ENCOUNTER AT L-5

Atari VCS
Data Age
Suggested Retail Price: $25.00
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The huge orbiting colony which hangs in space between the Earth and the moon is under attack by implaccable foes. Your job is to man the gun, which can be moved horizontally across the bottom of the playfield, and the aiming cursor at the top of the screen which blasts the invaders out of the colony's immediate air space.

This is a refreshing cartridge, in that it offers a play-mechanic not often seen in other electronic games. The need to line up each shot so that the blast will take out an enemy on its way from the bottom of the display to the top gives *Encounter* much of its spice.

ESCAPE FROM THE MINDMASTER

Starpath
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $21.95
Category: Adventure-Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Escape is your only hope in this adventure contest set in the maze-like stronghold of a super-scientist known only as the Mindmaster. This ultra-genius is dispassionately evaluating your performance in dealing with the various dangers and problems that crop up in the winding corridors.

If you've always wondered how the labyrinth looks to Pac-Man, this cassette will go far to satisfy your curiosity. A simple system of joystick movement lets you roam the halls in search of excitement.

FIREBALL

Starpath
Atari VCS
Category: Wall-Bashing
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This Starpath cassette gives the traditional wall-busting game a science fictional slant — and a few new wrinkles. For one thing, the walls are arranged in a variety of shapes instead of just being a series of horizontal bands. There's also the possibility of having up to six fireballs in play at the same time.

FIREFIGHTER

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $18.86
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

There's a warehouse ablaze in the city, and you must both extinguish the fire and save any people who might be trapped inside the burning building. With the firefighter standing directly in front of the warehouse, the arcader can aim the water hose by moving the joystick forward and back to raise and lower the stream of water. To perform a rescue, the firefighter is guided to the engine and up the ladder using the hand controller.

Firefighter is a relatively simple game, though it is lively enough to prove entertaining to many. Younger gamers will probably like it more than older ones.

FISHING DERBY

Activision
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Good strategy is more important than sheer blinding hand-speed in this game based on the idea of a fish-catching contest. Each player sits on the end of a dock, line lowered into the water. The position of the joystick governs how far away from the dock you trawl and how deep the lure is set. The greater the depth, the more valuable will be the fish you haul to the surface, using either the stick or the automatic reel (represented by the action button). A shark swims back and forth across the screen, gobbling up any hooked fish like the inhuman eating machine it is.

Fishing Derby is particularly suitable for play by the entire family. The leisurely pace of the action negates any small advantages that youngsters may have in physical reflexes, while the strategies needed are straightforward enough to be well within reach of youthful minds.

FREEWAY

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

The theme of this game is summed up in the old riddle, "Why did the chicken cross the road?" You're in charge of steering the fearless fowl safely across 10 terrifying lanes of vehicular traffic. Depending on which level of difficulty is selected, getting hit by a car or truck sends the chicken back to the bottom of the screen or, at best, pushes the bird one lane closer to that original starting point.

Designer David Crane has created a selection of courses to satisfy every taste. Each is loosely based on the traffic pattern of a major American thoroughfare, like Chicago's Lakeshore Drive or New York's Long Island Expressway.

FROGS AND FLIES

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $24.86
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This slice-of-swamp-life cartridge is a solid entry-level cartridge for younger home arcaders, though its play-action may well attract some of their elders, too. The participant directs the on-screen activities of a frog using the joystick and tries to snare the flies as they zip across the screen. The important tactical consideration is learning to time the amphibians leap so that tongue and insect arrive at the same point in space simultaneously.

GANGSTER ALLEY

Atari VCS
Spectravision
Suggested Retail Price: $21.86
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

A gang of five miscreants, led by the always dangerous *"Nitro Ed"*, are the adversaries in this target shoot, patterned after a non-electronic game that was popular in commercial game parlors for many, many years. The gamer uses the cursor to move a gunsight around a playfield which depicts a many windowed, multi-story building. The baddies periodically pop up in an open window, and your job is to shoot them before they do the same to you. Occasionally, an innocent citizen appears in a window, and shooting such a bystander will cost you points.

GOLF

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $17.70
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

Water hazards, trees and rough will be the main barriers to breaking par (36) on this nine-hole course for one-or two-player gaming action. While it's possible to drive through the branches of the foliage that dot the course, more prudent golfers will probably want to take it a little easier and play it straight.

Sand traps can be a problem; the ball not only slows markedly but turns invisible! The only way to find it again is to use the head of the club as a divining rod, and by moving your on-screen representative back and forth across the trap, estimate the ball's location by the direction in which the club head points.

GOPHER

Atari VCS
U.S. Games
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Your only chance to remain a successful farmer is to thwart the attack the local gophers have launched against your poor, defenseless carrot patch. Well, maybe not totally defenseless. You've got a hoe with which you can bop one of those arrogant little pests and make him retreat into its hole before it can snatch a carrot snack. You can also attempt to fill in the tunnels as the gophers create them, thus denying access to the carrots on the surface.

A duck periodically flies past and drops carrot seeds onto the playfield. If the farmer can catch one and nurture it properly, a new carrot comes into being.

GORF

CBS Videogames
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Midway's popular pay-for-play design comes to the 2600 in good shape, thanks to a sensitive translation joy by CBS. Three screens of entertaining action await the player, each challenging the gamer's skill in a different fashion. Most home arcaders will especially enjoy the second scenario, in which the player must use the cannon located at the bottom of the display to shoot the squadron of enemy ships that comes roaring out of a vortex in space.

GRAND PRIX

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Racing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Find out if you're the heir apparent to Mario Andretti in this three-track racing game. You must use the controller to steer around other, sometimes slower cars as you negotiate turns, position your vehicle for crossing the bridge and other activities associated with racing. And if the other drivers don't send you skidding into a collision that turns your formula car into scrap, you'd better watch out for the oil slicks that can take you out of the running in an instant.

Performance on all the tracks included in the cartridge is rated in terms of elapsed time. An on-screen clock ticks off fractions of a second as you strive to record a record time in one of the single-lap events.

HAUNTED HOUSE

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $26.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Haunted House is a solitaire adventure which takes the gamer on an eerie electronic visit to Graves Manor, an abandoned edifice that periodically frightens and perplexes the localites. The player takes the role of a treasure hunter and must search the building's 24 rooms for a magic urn.

The test of an arcader's skill is simply the completion of the quest for the urn in a reasonable amount of time. The game's audio/visual trimmings are excellent and give the arcader the spine-tingling sensation that something spooky is always about to happen.

HOME RUN

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $12.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Poor
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 4

Home Run depicts an arcade-oriented approach to simulating baseball on the TV. The duel between hitter and pitcher is the main theme of this game and depending on the variation selected, each team has one, two or three fielders, one of which doubles as the hurler.

Home Run is unique in that it's the only baseball videogame cartridge that can be played solo. Its lack of the "feel" of real sports action, however, ultimately relegates it to benchwarmer status.

ICE HOCKEY

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Obviously, producing a realistic simulation of hockey within the limitations of the Atari 2600's memory is a job worthy of a veritable Solomon of programmers. Alan Miller has seized on most of the essentials of the rink sport and incorporated them in this fun-to-play, rock'em-sock'em version.

Each coach is in charge of a two-man team on the ice. The joystick controls whichever man is nearest the puck, making it possible to set up some fairly sophisticated offensive and defensive plays. Check (and some less legal tactics) are permissable in *Ice Hockey*, though there's no referee to call a penalty. Still, the ebb and flow of the action makes it inadvisable to goon it up too much, lest you be outskated by the opposing team.

INDY 500

Atari
Standard Atari
Suggested Retail Price: $32.35
Category: Racing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

This premium-priced cartridge is pure action from start to finish. Each participant — one or two can compete — uses special driving controllers provided with the game to steer racers around an oval track.

Indy 500 lays claim to a cute little flaw. The way the system confirms that the player has completed a lap is to create a pair of invisible lines, one starting at center screen and going straight up while the other starts at the center and goes straight down. To score a point, and register a completed lap, the player just has to touch the first line and then pass over the second. The process can be repeated ad infinitum.

As with most Atari titles, this one offers numerous variations. The most exciting one is *Ice Race*, which uses a super-slick surface for the usual roadbed, forcing drivers to use their skills to the utmost to keep from sailing off the screen at every turn.

INFILTRATE

Atari VCS
Games by Apollo
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Climbing-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This cartridge combines elements of *Donkey Kong* and *Berzerk* to produce a bracing action game that features movement on every square inch of the multi-level playfield. As the infiltrator, you must use the elevators to climb up the skyscraper, which is now occupied by monsters from another world who will shoot you if they get within range. Once you make it to the top of the playfield, you can grab the key, head down to your starting position at the bottom and go through the security door.

The graphics for this game are quite colorful and appealing, although they are sketchy if you give them a close look. Still, the play-action is a big plus, making this one very enjoyable videogame.

JAWBREAKER

Tigervision
Atari 2600
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Chase

Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Here's an oddity, a videogame version of an existing computer program that surpasses the earlier game in originality. The 2600 edition banishes the *Jawbreaker* maze in favor of a strikingly innovative arrangement. The dots which the player-controlled teeth chomp are arranged in horizontal rows with walls separating each one from the lines immediately above and below it. There are breaks in the wall through which the teeth can pass to the next line.

The goal, as in virtually all maze-chase videogames, is to collect every dot, while avoiding the four nasties which constantly shadow your chomper around the screen. The unusual configuration of the playfield, however, means that player's will have to forget most of the lessons learned in mastering other games of this ilk. That's a big plus, of course, since it means you'll be able to play *Jawbreaker* for many, many hours before settling into a high-scoring groove.

JOURNEY'S ESCAPE

Atari VCS
Data Age
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The world's first rock 'n' roll videogame presents the home arcader with a unique situation and an equally novel test of skill. The band, Journey, has just completed a concert and is standing at center stage. From there, you must conduct each band member through a gauntlet that includes roadies, groupies, autograph hounds and other denizens of the music world to the limousine waiting to whisk them away.

The sound accompaniment to the action consists of computer-generated renditions of some of the songs from Journey's top-selling album, "Escape".

KABOOM!

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $18.00
Category: Catching
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Hand-eye coordination is the most important success ingredient in this sometimes frenetic "cute" game. A mad bomber runs back and forth near the top of the playfield, dropping incendiary devices over the wall. These bombs, which plummet to Earth as fast as 13 per second when the program really gets going, must be caught in one of the three vertically stacked buckets controlled by the arcader. Each time a bomb hits the ground uncaught, it ignites a chain reaction that fills the screen with a series of sharp explosions and subtracts one bucket from the stack. The game ends when all buckets are lost.

KING KONG

Tigervision
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

The 1930's movie classic comes to the home gaming screen courtesy of Tigervision, but something has clearly been lost in the translation. The creature who rolls barrels down the ramps of the skyscraper at the hero attempting to scale the heights and rescue Fay Wray looks more like a giant teddy bear than the legendary gorilla.

The play-action is a bit sluggish, and better arcaders may find the platforms-and-ladders playfield a bit too simple to hold their interest. Conversely, this is probably a less frustrating cartridge for younger gamers than the other titles in the climbing category, which do tend to require considerable skill and finesse.

LADY BUG

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Lady Bug is the outgrowth of the cross between maze-chase play-action and pinball scoring. The arcader uses the joystick to steer a lady bug all around the maze, avoiding contact with the stationary skulls and the equally deadly enemy insects that emerge from the garden at the center of the playfield at regular intervals. The lady bug has another advantage helping to keep the hostile trackers at wing's length: you can move the turnstiles which are liberally scattered around the maze to cut off the route pursuers are using to chase you.

Scoring is much enlivened by the opportunity to spell out words "Special" and "Extra" over the course of play on several screens and acquire extra lady bugs or bonus points.

LASER BLAST

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This science fiction game turns the typical invasion contest upside down. No longer are you the lone defender against a hoard of aliens advancing down the playfield toward your bravely defended position. This time, you're carrying the fight to the enemy as the commander of a squadron of attack saucers which are attempting to flatten the bases which the aliens have built on the moon.

Your ship approaches each three-gun installation from the left. Pushing the action button and holding it down extends a gun from the underside of the saucer. The player moves the joystick in the appropriate direction to aim the laser weapon, and lets go of the button to launch a deadly energy bolt at one of the targets below. The aliens have a forcefield which keeps the saucer from descending to the surface of the moon for easier shots, and this barrier pushes the attack saucer a little closer to the top of the screen with each succeeding round of play.

LOCK 'N' CHASE

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $34.86
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is a streamlined version of Mattel's Intellivision cartridge of the same name, but it still rates as one of the best examples of the maze-chase genre for this system. The home arcader portrays a safecracker who has penetrated a vault full of gold bars. Unfortunately for the electronic felon, the police have got the scent. The action consists of scooping up all the gold bars (for some reason they're lying right there on the floor of every corridor in the maze-like vault), and escape through the vault door before one of the police officers catches up to you.

The thief has one powerful weapon on his side. He can instantly construct barriers which block off the corridor from any law enforcement minions who might be following too closely.

LOST LUGGAGE

Atari VCS
Games by Apollo
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Catch

Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

This cartridge is based on a problem that is a lot more down-to-earth than attacking space invaders or rambunctuous dragons. You are cast in the role of a harried skycap, trying to round up all the baggage which is spewing off the conveyor belt in every conceivable direction. If an ordinary bag gets past your grasping fingers, it bursts open to reveal a lot of rumpled clothing which cascades across the screen in amusing fashion.

Apart from some rough edges on the visuals, the biggest rap against *Lost Luggage* is that it is not sufficiently varied or challenging. By remaining as far up the playfield as possible, the skycap can snag most of the bags before they get a chance to fan out over the full width of the screen.

MALAGAI

Atari VCS
Answer Software
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Although this maze-chase has a nominal science fiction theme — theoretically, you're moving from deck to deck of a huge mothership looking for your scout craft — it comes closest to being a version of "video tag". Your on-screen character enters the playfield from a room at the bottom. You must then catch, one at a time, a series of three aliens who rove the halls. Catching an alien gives you custody of the key it carries. You must then carry this key to the series of locks located at the center of the top playfield boundary. Once all three aliens are caught — and they must be nabbed in the proper sequence, which is indicated at the top of the screen — the player can progress to a harder level within the mothership. If any Malagai warrior, even the one from whom you have just taken a key, touches your spacefarer, you lose him.

MARAUDER

Tigervision
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

The gamer uses the joystick to control an on-screen hero who must move from room to room in a complex, tightly-guarded by enemy robots, in this festival of fight-and-move thrills. The outstanding innovation in *Marauder*, which first saw the light of day as an Apple II program from Sierra On-Line, is that only foes which would logically be in the on-screen protagonist's line-of-sight are visible to the player on the screen. This feature makes *Marauder* less predictable than contests which give the human holding the joystick an omniscent view of the action.

MAZE CRAZE

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $20.20
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 7

The designers of *Maze Craze* have built onto the basic puzzle structure, by adding the tactics of pursuit and avoidance and a madcap race for the playfield's only exit.

Gamers portray video lawmen who patrol a rabbit's warren of semi-deserted streets. Depending on the variant selected, cops decide whether to catch unarmed robbers or to avoid armed ones — and then reach the safety of the exit.

The cartridge offers four speed options ranging from plodder to greased lightning, to keep pace with the players' increasing skill levels.

The cops-and-robbers metaphor does, admittedly, wear thin at times, but once you explore some of the fiendishly clever options, little details become insignificant. If you like mazes, you'll crave *Maze Craze*.

MEGAFORCE

Atari VCS
20th Century Fox Games
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Strap yourself into the pilot's chair of this remarkable all-purpose mobile weapons system and get set for desert warfare at an intensity you've never before experienced. You have four ships, available one at a time as the previous one is taken out of the battle by enemy fire, and you must zoom through screen after screen of incoming missiles and enemy airships as you wreak havon among the evil-doers.

MISSILE COMMAND

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.80
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Gamers launch anti-aircraft missiles from the game's command center, positioned in the middle of six cities under its protection (at the base of the playfield). Armed with three 10-load rounds of ammo, gaming commandoes employ a joystick controller to target and launch the anti-ballistic missiles that will hopefully detonate the incoming rockets before they can devastate your cities.

Cities are destroyed when hit by enemy missiles, so be very careful as at least one city must remain standing in order to keep this graphically outstanding game alive.

MOUSE TRAP

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Anyone who has ever laughed at a "Tom and Jerry" cartoon will recognize the theme behind this cartridge. You are a mouse scampering through a maze filled with little bits of cheese. As your ravenous rodent gobbles up these dainty morsels, you must be on guard against pursuit by a bunch of cats on the lookout for *their* dinner. Eating one of the four bones located near the corners of the maze gives the mouse the power to change into a dog for a few seconds of sweet revenge against those feline attackers. The golden nugget is that this transformation need not take place immediately after you've chomped the bone. You can save this handy metamorphosis for the moment when it's likely to do you the most good.

Also important to *Mouse Trap* is the fact that the maze isn't static. As you ramble up and down the corridors, you can open and close sets of doors which radically alter the shape of the labyrinth.

NIGHT DRIVER

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $20.20
Category: Driving
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

In *Night Driver*, you race along a twisting, treacherous two-lane blacktop, with short luminous pylons spaced yards apart along both sides of the road, as your only guide throughout the inky night.

Gamers who just love driving games — and have always wanted to become good-buddy truckers — will be glued to the wheel of this long-time commercial arcade favorite. *Night Driver* demands lightning reflexes, total concentration and a high degree of intensity.

The object is to travel the greatest distance in the shortest amount of time. There are three levels of difficulty, all controllable by a paddle, which is used as a steering wheel and the button as the accelerator.

PAC-MAN

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $28.10
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Poor
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Poor
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 4

The game's graphics are clunky and unsophisticated — there are no changing bonus items such as cherries, limes or keys, but simply an orange square with a blue dot inside — and the sounds, except for an inappropriate metallic "boing" whenever the gobbler consumes a pill, are virtually nonexistent. Joystick response on all game variations is poor.

As in the coin-op classic, arcaders maneuver the gobbler around a labyrinth stocked with pills and patrolled by ravenous goblins.

For serious-minded Atarians who demand their home versions match the quality of their coin-op cousins, they just may find themselves seriously disappointed.

PHASER PATROL

Starpath
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: First-Person Space Piloting & Shooting
Number of Players: 1 (Requires Supercharger)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The Dracon Armada is on the march in your neighborhood galaxy, and it's up to you, as commander of a powerful warship, to hunt them down and end their threat to universal peace. The idea is to wipe them out before your ship runs out of fuel, ammunition or both. Of course, you can always plan a stop at one of your starbases for some more supplies.

Phaser Patrol, like most of the other games in this genre, makes use of a dual display. One presents the galactic map for use in plotting overall strategy, while the other offers a tactical battlefield for ship-to-ship combat.

PLANET PATROL

Atari VCS
Spectravision
Suggested Retail Price: $21.86
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This intense action game pits the player, as pilot of a sleek attack fighter against a seemingly endless horde of rival missile-firing ships. The idea is to skim across the fairly nondescript terrain, blasting as you go.

Complications include the need for periodic refueling and the opportunity to rescue some of your air force's downed pilots from the clutches of the enemy. *Planet Patrol* is also one of the few cartridges that offers both daylight and nighttime scenarios.

RAM IT

Atari VCS
Telesys
Suggested Retail Price: $29.99
Category: Wall Bashing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The gamer controls a duo-directional shooter which can move vertically up and down the playfield's center dividing line. Stacked one above the next at the edges of the display are multi-hued horizontal bars which start growing toward the center line when play commences.

The only way to whittle down a bar is to shoot off a hunk of it. Any bar that's completely erradicated stays that way. If two bars on the same horizontal level meet in the center of the screen, they create a barrier through which the gamer's shooter can't move.

RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Considering that players input all their movement and combat instructions utilizing the simple joystick controller, this adventure game packs quite a whallop in a small package. Set in the little-understood world of Egyptian mythology, *Riddle of the Sphinx* challenges a would-be desert explorer to dare the perils — and reap the treasures — to be found in this land of mystery.

Riddle of the Sphinx will obviously not be to everyone's taste. The "boot and bash" brigade — those who hate to read the instructions before slapping the cartridge in the slot — might have a rough time. Yet a reasonably thorough perusal of the rule book should yield enough information to make learning one's way around this complex mini-world reasonably trouble-free.

RIVER RAID

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.50
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

It's easy to drop bombs on sitting duck targets from a safe altitude, but the situation changes radically when you're forced to fly your fighter up the playfield, just above the surface of the river as you strafe targets. Starting at the bottom of the screen, you head north, blowing up ships, helicopters and bridges. An on-screen gauge monitors your fuel supply, which you can replenish by flying over a fuel dump.

Although the graphics do not attain the highest Activision standard, the thrill-a-minute action makes amends for any shortfall.

ROBOT COMMANDO RAID

Atari VCS
U.S. Games
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: War
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Rosy-fingered dawn breaks over the peaceful village. Then comes the discordant sound of helicopters cutting through the still morning air. A robot paratroop drop is about to commence, and the town you are charged with defending is the target.

The player wields the joystick to aim the anti-aircraft gun, hitting the action button to send a shell at the helicopter, robot paratrooper or super-deadly bomber. The parachutists come faster and faster as the game progresses. Each one that achieves a safe landing will demolish part of one of the town's buildings, or even begin excavating a tunnel intended to undermine your gun emplacement located at center screen. If the mechanical invaders burrow

GO ONE-ON-ONE.
MAN-TO-MAN.
NON-STOP.
TRIGGER MISSILES.
FIRE CANNON.
ATTACK.
ESCAPE. EXPLODE.
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GO
M.A.D.
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An Action Video Game Cartridge
M.A.D.
Missile Attack and Defense
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M.A.D. is the combat game that works like real combat: Two people. Head-to-head. At the same time. No waiting turns. Your evil opponent launches attack missiles. You blast them out of the sky, then try your hand at being bad guy while he defends. It's constant action, no playing benchwarmer. One and two-player programs, it's M.A.D.

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beneath your battery, the game is lost. Otherwise, it continues as long as you can keep the relentless invasion force at bay.

ROOM OF DOOM

Atari VCS
CommaVid
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Every creature's hand is turned against you in this all-out battle contest. You begin play in the middle of a room. Then, depending on which of the many variations is chosen, eight doors appear in the walls of the chamber. And from these apertures issues a steady stream of deadly fire. Within the room, the gamer's on-screen emissary is constantly stalked by an unkillable monster (which changes each time you progress to the next most difficult room by emptying the previous one of hostile marksmen). The most you can do with the room creature is temporarily stun it with your gun, causing it to vanish for a moment, only to reappear next to the nearest wall. The object is to maneuver around the room and eliminate the evil folks who are shooting away at your on-screen representative.

SKIING

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

You'll have a choice between a variety of slalom and downhill courses in this snow sports cartridge. The arcader employs the joystick to whoosh down the slopes, staying within the gates and avoiding hazards such as moguls (rock outcroppings) and trees.

One good point is that the courses run the gamut from ones which are suitable for beginners,to layouts that are capable of testing even the best video athletes to the limit.

SLOT RACERS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $17.70
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Slot Racers ranks as one of the most important games in the labyrinth-maze category. It's a fast-moving, head-to-head thriller that requires quick thinking, and even quicker manipulation of the joystick. This *a-maze-ing* cartridge puts players in the driver's seat as they drive on-screen cars through a byzantine network of city streets, taking potshots at each other with missile launchers mounted on the cars' front hoods.

There are four different street-map mazes, an equal number of car speeds and several manners in which to handle the missiles.

Even though *Slot Racers* has virtually nothing to do with either slot cars or racing of any kind, it's still a challenging, fast paced maze-athon.

SMURF

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This cartridge, based on the characters which have become stars in the world of Saturday morning kiddie television, doesn't quite compare to the company's ColecoVision edition of the same title, but it's certainly not too shabby in its own right. You are represented on the screen by a Smurf who must successfully negotiate the hazards on the way to Gargamel's castle. Once there, the cute critter avoids some creepy crawlies and effects the rescue of the kidnapped Smurfette.

The main action consists of jumping over obstacles such as fences. It takes a little experience to figure out exactly when to launch the Smurf skyward, but overall, it's not too tough a challenge for the younger arcaders who are likely to be most attracted to its content.

SNEAK 'N' PEEK

Atari VCS
U.S. Games
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Electronic hide-and-seek may sound like a bizarre premise for a videogame cartridge, but *Sneak'n' Peek* really works as a kideogame that's expressly aimed at the youngest home arcaders. When it is a participant's turn to hide, he uses the joystick to move from room to room — or even visit the exterior of the house — and, eventually, to select one of a number of possible hiding places to be found in each chamber.

The other player then returns to the TV set and must, as in the real-life kid's game, search for his friends' hidden location.

SPACE ATTACK

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $29.86
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Strategy and tactics both play an important part in this outer space combat cartridge. Players first use the radar screen to pinpoint alien space squadrons and then switch to a close-up view of the ship-to-ship dogfighting in the void.

SPACE CAVERN

Atari VCS
Games by Apollo
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This successor to the popular *Space Chase* brings the action to the surface of a planet, where a space-suited explorer is about to confront the flying and crawling denizens of a strange new world. Pushing the joystick to the left or right allows you to fire at the shaggy Marsupods which rush out of side caves at your space-farer, while hitting the action button launches a zap at the Electrosauri hovering near the ceiling of the cavern. This unusual control scheme takes some getting used to, but most arcaders will master it after a few rounds of practice.

This is an intensely action-oriented contest. There's lots happening on the screen, and you wont't be able to let your guard down for a minute or you'll have to watch your on-screen hero sizzle inside his suit.

SPACE INVADERS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.80
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Space Invaders became *the* biggest craze since the pinball machine when Bally introduced it in American arcades. Atari's version closely resembles the commercial

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arcade prototype. In this one, 36 aliens arranged evenly in six columns march down the screen toward the player's horizontally-mobile laser cannon, which is located at the bottom of the playfield.

Gamers attempt to keep attacking aliens from landing on Earth by blasting them out of the sky, one by one. The catch is — the aliens are also armed and fire back relentlessly. A player's turn ends when the aliens destroy the cannon, with three such rounds constituting a complete game. If the aliens actually reach Earth, the game stops immediately, regardless of the number of rounds played.

SPACE JOCKEY

Atari VCS
U.S. Games
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

As pilot of the plane which starts near the left edge of the display, you must duel with the jets, prop planes, helicopters and ground-based tanks which are often able to get a first-shot advantage against you. There are also passive barriers in the form of airborne barrage balloons and trees and houses upon the ground. These can be eliminated for points, but their main function is to restrict your plane's movement so that it is easier for the powerful computer-controlled war machines to score a hit.

Although this is a good, solid cartridge, it just misses the top rung. One problem: because there is no penalty for touching the ground with your ship, it is possible to skim along the surface — when the game is played at easy difficulty settings — scoring bushel baskets full of points without a lot of conscious thought or effort. Moving the pair of difficulty switches to the "A" position will pretty much overcome this flaw.

SPIDER-MAN

Atari VCS
Parker Brothers
Suggested Retail Price: $29.86
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Smashing out of the four-color world of Marvel Comics comes the first electronic adventure, starring everyone's favorite friendly neighborhood web-slinger. Guide Spider-Man up the side of the building using the action button to shoot a strand of webbing, which you then direct to the desired point with the joystick. Once the line is properly cast, Spiderman can move along it as directed by the joystick. After the arachnid crime fighter scales the building, it's time to attempt an even more dangerous climb of the even more hazardous high voltage tower, where Spidey must avoid the bombs set by his nemesis, the Green Goblin. If Spider-man catches too many crooks or defuses too many bombs, the Goblin activates the super-bomb. To put this device out of commission, Spider-man must battle the arch-villian himself.

STAMPEDE

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Put your hand on the joystick and, in this game, *you* become the cowpoke riding the range along the left edge of the screen. Your job is to rope the various steers that come into view. If you let them get past you and your trusty pony, you lose one of your three game "lives". There are animals in various colors, and learning which ones to chase first goes a long way toward developing a winning strategy for this contest, which is something like *Fishing Derby* turned on its side and conducted at double-speed.

All is not serene for our cowboy hero, however. The horse may shy if asked to run over a skull, and the occasional black strays which appear on screen present the player with a chance to display some fancy steering and roping talent.

STAR MASTER

Atari VCS
Activision
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: First-person Piloting and Shooting
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

There's a hostile galaxy out there, waiting to be tamed by your interstellar cruiser. It seems a veritable hoard of aliens is threatening key friendly star bases, and it's up to you to battle the enemy or risk annihilation of these strategically valuable stations.

Star Master features two separate game displays. There's a galaxy map which indicates the positions of friendly and enemy forces, and is used to plot hyperspace jumps. Once your ship arrives in a sector in which there is alien activity, a flick of the "color/b&w" slide switch on the 2600's console flips over to the tactical screen on which ship to ship battles are actually fought.

STAR VOYAGER

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: First-Person Piloting and Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Unlike most of the programs which involve steering and shooting in outer space, *Star Voyager* is not one of those contests in which a lone cruiser flits from galactic sector to galactic sector in search of tactical battle opportunities. Instead, you're patrolling the spacelanes between the all-important star gates that make interstellar travel possible. Alien marauders will try to attack you as you go from gate to gate, either crippling your ship outright or possibly pulling you so far off course that you won't rendezvous with the next gate. Since refueling takes place at these special locations, failure to accurately guide your vessel from gate to gate will eventually cause you to run out of fuel.

SUICIDE MISSION

Starpath
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1 (Requires Supercharger)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

There are shoot-outs set in space, on land and under the sea, but this action-packed cassette postulates the human body itself as the environment in which the hostilities take place. After shrinking down to suitable size, the player must pilot a tiny submarine through the human bloodstream in an effort to reach — and defeat — the source of infection that threatens the host body's heart.

In the deadly struggle, the gamer must fire torpedoes at the germs. Be prepared to watch them split into two, smaller enemies, which must then also be blasted by your metal fish. And then there are some really diabolical germs that can sneak up on you when you least expect them.

SUPER BREAKOUT

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.80
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Super Breakout is probably the greatest redesign of the popular ball-and-paddle contest that first reached arcades several years ago. The cartridge itself, actually contains four games — *Breakout, Double, Progressive* and *Cavity*. All four variations offer an infinite succession of target walls and on-screen scoring that includes both a numerical total and a comment by the computer on each player's skill.

The VCS edition offers a wide array of totally enchanting sounds, which serves as a vehicle for turning a well-respected, but slightly dated program into a wildly contemporary hit. *Super Breakout* for the VCS shows skill, imagination and loving care in its design. Even owners of *Breakout* should give this one a try, because if this one doesn't get you, you can't be got!

SUPER CHALLENGE BASEBALL

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $29.86
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

This cartridge, like its running mate, *Super Challenge Football*, represents the best simulation of the real-life sport for the Atari 2600. Although there are only eight men on each team — no shortstop here — the action is remarkably close to the play of real baseball. You can throw curve balls, steal bases and even work the hit and run play, once you've acquired some familiarity with the relatively simple control system used in this contest.

SUPER CHALLENGE FOOTBALL

Atari VCS
Mattel M-Network
Suggested Retail Price: $29.86
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

This is the best pigskin program currently obtainable for the Atari 2600 and Sears Tele-Arcade systems. Two coaches square off in a nicely detailed simulation that gives each the opportunity to try out numerous offensive and defensive play formations. The greatest strength of *Super Challenge Football* is that each lineman can be individually programmed by the human coach before every play — and all input is handled with a few simple flicks of the joystick!

Atari owners who desire a superb video football cartridge need look no further.

SUPERMAN

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.80
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

A solitaire game requiring a good memory, sharp planning and a bit of hand-eye coordination, *Superman* transforms the gamer into that crime bustin' Man of Steel! As Superman, you are called upon to capture Luthor and his four henchmen, cart them off, one by one, to the metropolis jail, and rebuild the city's bridge as quickly as you can.

The on-screen hero, naturally, has super strength, super vision and the power of flight to help him in timing his moves. But always remember to be wary of the Kryptonite bombs, for they can rob Sups of his special powers, that only Lois Lane can restore by her touch.

SURROUND

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $9.50
Category: Line-Building
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Average
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Players of *Surround* use a joystick to steer a small square across an otherwise blank field. The square generates a line in its wake, and the object is to keep your line growing. This is accomplished by avoiding any touching of the playfield boundary, your opponent's line or your own. The "head" of each line moves constantly, picking up speed during the course of a round.

The game can be played solo (variation #4 is best), but this does more for developing gamers' steering proficiency, rather than overall strategy. The computer just tries to avoid mistakes and doesn't play as aggressively as a "live" foe.

TAPE WORM

Atari VCS
Spectravision
Suggested Retail Price: $21.86
Category: Line-Building
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

Steering is the ability most important to achieving a high score in this game. The player employs the joystick to direct Slinky the snake around the playfield in such a way that the serpent's head intersects the little square targets. Hitting a target lengthens the snake, making maneuvering within the confines of the playfield progressively more difficult. There are also added worries in the form of a spider and a bird, which are deadly to your snake.

TENNIS

Activision
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

A trapezoidal playing field separates this cartridge from the raft of *Pong*-type games which preceded it. The illusion of depth, heightened by the fact that the ball actually casts a shadow in flight, is surprisingly convincing, even with the sparse graphics standard for 2600-compatible programs.

Despite the apparent simplicity of *Tennis*, the action is a fairly satisfying recreation of the real-life net sport. You can rush the net, run for baseline-gunning shots and so forth. The direction the ball takes is determined by the point it strikes on the player's racket, though the program will automatically hit the ball whenever this is possible without the arcader having to do anything to initiate the swing.

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Atari VCS
Parker Brothers
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The scene in "The Empire Strikes Back" in which the rebels fight a battle against the Imperial Walkers on the ice planet Hoth is the inspiration for this game. You must command a snow speeder in an attempt to stop the line of ponderous, but deadly, AT-AT's from crossing the multi-screen playfield and destroying your power station.

A single hit from the player's weapon generally does no more than tickle an Imperial Walker. They degenerate in four stages as they accumulate increments of damage. The speeder, too, can survive more than one hit, though a second will cause it to crash. You can repair damage by making a brief landing, thus keeping each component of your three-ship squadron in the game as long as possible. If a speeder remains undamaged for a period of time, the Force is with the player while the theme from the movie plays, making the speeder temporarily immune to attack.

THRESHOLD

Tigervision
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The hallmarks of this invasion contest are that the opposition consists of a succession of different types of aliens, each attacking with a specific strategy, and that the player's cannon be moved vertically within the lower third of the playfield, as well as along the horizontal axis.

Threshold originally had appeared as a disk for the Apple II from Sierra On-Line Systems, and that company produced the translation for the 2600 appearing under the Tigervision banner. The result: a cartridge that plays very much like the computer-game original.

TRICKSHOT

Atari VCS
Imagic
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Even if you don't have room for a full-size pool table in your home or apartment, you can get a taste of green felt action with this change-of-pace cartridge. Rather than concentrating on recreating a full-blown version of pool, this cartridge stresses the highly intricate, multi-carom shots that give the real sport so much of its popularity.

The gamer uses the joystick to line up the angles for each trick shot, and then employs the action button to determine the strength with which the cue will impact the ball.

TURBO

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Driving
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The premiere road-racing coin-op of all time — well, at least so far — comes to the Atari 2600 in a version that is surprisingly similar to the full-stroke original. Oh, the multi-screen scenarios that you motor through as you attempt to log miles, pass cars and avoid collisions with the ambulances aren't nearly as good as what you saw in the commercial game parlors from Sega, but a 2600-compatible cartridge has seldom looked better.

VENTURE

Atari VCS
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

You're the dauntless adventurer Winky in the VCS edition of this quest for treasure in a multi-floor, multi-room dungeon. Each room has a different type of guardian for its treasure, so this is one cartridge that you'll be learning to play a little bit at a time, as you progress further and further into the program as your skill grows.

Winky has a powerful weapon in his bow and an inexhaustible quiver of arrows. Contact with the body of one of the creatures, even if it is already dead, is fatal to Winky, so careful steering in confined spaces

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becomes a continuing necessity. Actually, really skillful players can often dart into a room, snatch the treasure and escape out the door without even having to battle any of the nasties.

VIDEO CHESS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $26.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Video Chess, offering eight levels of play, can give even the best pawn-pusher a challenge. One of the levels is designed to help beginners learn the basics. The difference among the levels is that the computer progressively gets more time to develop its moves. The game responds within 10 seconds at level one, but the machine can take as much as *10 hours* per move at level seven.

Players position a joystick over the piece they want to move. After pushing the red button to engage the mechanism, the player guides the piece to its new square.

Unfortunately, Atari made no provision for using *Video Chess* with two human players, letting it simply replace a regular set of chessmen and board. Aside from that, *Video Chess* is a game that any video/chess enthusiast should find rewarding for many hours of gaming enjoyment.

VIDEO OLYMPICS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Video Olympics takes the *Pong* concept to the limits with *Robot Pong*, an astonishingly good solitaire version, *Super Pong*, which allows each player two-paddle play, and *Foozpong*, in which gamers get to guide a vertically scrolling three-paddle column. You get all of these in addition to that venerable father of videogames, *Pong*, itself.

All two-player games incorporate four-player versions when utilizing a second pair of paddle controllers, which must be purchased separately.

Video Olympics wouldn't be complete without such offerings as *Hockey III*, which adds yet another dimension of play — the "catch" feature — allowing players to hold onto the puck for awhile before passing.

In *Volleyball*, players move their paddles horizontally across the bottom of the playfield, where a net can be found dividing the center of game play. Even "spiking" is permissable here, which is a good move when an opponent returns your volley from near the backline.

One game which proves to be less than satisfactory is *Handball*, where the inactive player is indicated by a blinking paddle. Atari's design adds lots of penalty points for interference, but little else to the contest's overall play.

Also included on the cart is a *Basketball* game, although it *is* a somewhat primitive version of Atari's own *Basketball*.

If all these variations aren't enough to satisfy that "Bruce Jenner Decathalonitis" in you, try *Quadrapong*, the ultimate permutation of the *Pong* idea, boasting four-player, four-wall action that's just superb for group play.

VIDEO PINBALL

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Video Pinball
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

There's plenty of action awaiting pin/vid enthusiasts in *Video Pinball*. Three large square bumpers arranged in a big triangle dominate the table, which incorporates a plunger chute on the right and an unguarded drain path on the far left.

Video Pinball includes two difficulty levels; the harder one adds two more drains at the bottom of the playfield. There are four variations, two solitaire and two head-to-head. However you decide to play, you can have the multipliers reset after each ball or let them amass through the course of the game, producing higher scores.

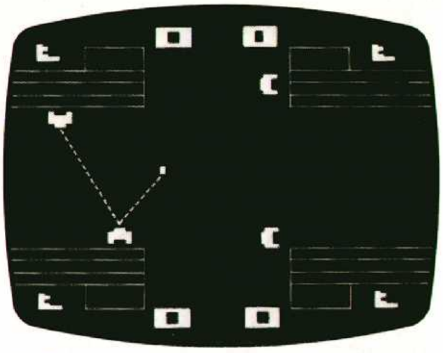
The main goal should be to surround the diamond-shaped drop targets located at the top of the screen. Eliminating all three earns 300 points, and even better, ups the multiplier on the 100-point thumper-bumpers by one.

WARLORDS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Average
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Warlords places the gamer in a medieval setting where the object is to batter down the walls of the opponent's castles and slay the monarchs inside. If a gamer winds up becoming the last surviving warlord, he'll earn himself a point, and if he wins five such battles, will go on to win an overall victory.



WIZARD OF WOR

CBS Videogames
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Like the other home editions of the Midway coin-op, this *Wizard of Wor* cartridge is fun to play solo, but an absolute blast when two gamers get together to try it at the same time. Each player controls a warrior, which is moved around a maze with the joystick, and fires with a touch of the action button. Moving through the maze are a variety of hostile creatures, including some invisible ones that must be tracked on the secondary "radar" display, located just beneath the main one.

The nasties are basically trying to trample the heroes underfoot. If the entire maze is cleared, there is a chance for a series of bonus encounters, including one with the evil wizard (who shoots first and asks questions later).

YARS' REVENGE

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

In *Yars' Revenge*, not only should the accompanying instructions be read, but so should the excellent comic book that comes in the package. The intro recounts the saga of the Yars, a peace-loving insectoid nation, whose main object, as well as the gamer's, is to protect their planet from the relentless attack of the dreaded Qotile. The Qotiles are no pushovers, so you must be especially prepared when taking them on.

The comic book intro gives the game a strong context, making the human player a character in a sci-fi space opera, while the play mechanic is easy to learn.

COLECOVISION

CARNIVAL

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is the definitive video shooting gallery, inspired by the type of multi-target extravanganzas that used to be commonplace in carnivals and large game parlors not so many years ago. The player uses an on-screen gun, which can be moved from side to side with the joystick, to fire at ducks, rabbits, owls, pipes and other traditional marks. Failure to dispose of the ducks before they get too low on the screen can reduce the shooter's bullet supply, because the bird will seemingly come to life and make a meal of the valuable projectiles.

Bonuses and penalties, either points or bullets, appear periodically in boxes located toward the top of the playfield. Sometimes, snagging extra ammo in this fashion is the only way to avoid running out and bringing the game to a premature ending.

COSMIC AVENGER

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Take command of a highly maneuverable rocket plane and try to run the gauntlet of this cartridge's three exciting scenarios. You start by flying over a city bristling with anti-aircraft guns and rockets, continue by dueling with tanks on the ground, assisted by UFOs in the sky, and finish up with an undersea journey made perilous by submarines, submerged batteries, mines and more. Getting through in one piece starts the process over, but this time at a higher difficulty setting.

The cartridge offers four levels of skill, each considerably more arduous than the last. *Cosmic Avenger* gives each player a three- or five-ship squadron, depending on the skill level, and novices will need all the aircraft they can get.

DONKEY KONG

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

As Mario the intrepid maintainence man, you must climb the ladders of the first screen to get to where a giant ape holds your girl friend captive. To continue pursuit of the gorilla on the second screen, Mario must remove the bolts which hold Donkey Kong's perch in place. Finally, if Mario successfully negotiates the elevators of the third play screen, he frees the kidnap victim and starts once again at a higher skill level.

Mario can deal with hazards, such as the barrels which roll along the girders of the half-completed skyscraper during the opening scenario, in two ways. He can either jump over them by hitting the action button or smash them with one of the hammers placed strategically around the playfield.

LADY BUG

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Lady Bug offers a combination of maze-chase strategy and pinball-type scoring. You must move your lady bug through the maze to collect the dots while avoiding any contact with the deadly, though stationary, skulls or the equally lethal, but mobile, insects. The lady bug has a powerful weapon in the form of the ability to move turnstiles built into the playfield that alters the shape of the maze corridors at will.

The bonus point system is straight out of the world of flipper games. Spelling out the words "Special" or "Extra" confers, respectively, a bushel of points or an extra lady bug, and there are also 2x, 3x and 5x bonus multipliers.

Lady Bug gives more scope for strategy than many other maze chase contests, and it's not quite as dependent on hand-eye coordination than most other titles within this genre.

MOUSE TRAP

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A special overlay which slips over the ColecoVision controller's keypad enables the arcader to open and close the on-screen, color coded gates in such a way as to reshape the maze-playfield and thwart the pursuing kittens. Eating one of the four bones gives the mouse the ability to turn into a ferocious dog which can turn the tables on the felines. This transformation is accomplished by hitting the appropriate spot on the keypad. A hawk capable of flying over the maze walls to catch the mouse is another danger threatening your rodent. One possible tactic is to duck into the labyrinth's center square, which instantly transfers you to one of the four corners, safely out of harm's way.

SMURF (Rescue)

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $30.50
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is every arcader's opportunity to experience life as part of a Saturday morning cartoon. The object is to run and jump through the dangers along the route to Gargamel's Castle and, once there, rescue the Smurfette who is held prisoner. Most of the play-action involves jumping over obstacles that get in the hero's way on the journey along the paths and through the bat-infested cavern to the forbidding castle.

Smurf Rescue is simple enough for the youngest arcaders at its most basic skill setting, but can challenge any adult at the higher levels. The ability to duck under things as well as jump over them is a particularly intriguing feature of this cartridge.

becomes a continuing necessity. Actually, really skillful players can often dart into a room, snatch the treasure and escape out the door without even having to battle any of the nasties.

VIDEO CHESS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $26.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Video Chess, offering eight levels of play, can give even the best pawn-pusher a challenge. One of the levels is designed to help beginners learn the basics. The difference among the levels is that the computer progressively gets more time to develop its moves. The game responds within 10 seconds at level one, but the machine can take as much as *10 hours* per move at level seven.

Players position a joystick over the piece they want to move. After pushing the red button to engage the mechanism, the player guides the piece to its new square.

Unfortunately, Atari made no provision for using *Video Chess* with two human players, letting it simply replace a regular set of chessmen and board. Aside from that, *Video Chess* is a game that any video/chess enthusiast should find rewarding for many hours of gaming enjoyment.

VIDEO OLYMPICS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Video Olympics takes the *Pong* concept to the limits with *Robot Pong*, an astonishingly good solitaire version, *Super Pong*, which allows each player two-paddle play, and *Foozpong*, in which gamers get to guide a vertically scrolling three-paddle column. You get all of these in addition to that venerable father of videogames, *Pong*, itself.

All two-player games incorporate four-player versions when utilizing a second pair of paddle controllers, which must be purchased separately.

Video Olympics wouldn't be complete without such offerings as *Hockey III*, which adds yet another dimension of play — the "catch" feature — allowing players to hold onto the puck for awhile before passing.

In *Volleyball*, players move their paddles horizontally across the bottom of the playfield, where a net can be found dividing the center of game play. Even "spiking" is permissable here, which is a good move when an opponent returns your volley from near the backline.

One game which proves to be less than satisfactory is *Handball*, where the inactive player is indicated by a blinking paddle. Atari's design adds lots of penalty points for interference, but little else to the contest's overall play.

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VIDEO PINBALL

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Video Pinball
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

There's plenty of action awaiting pin/vid enthusiasts in *Video Pinball*. Three large square bumpers arranged in a big triangle dominate the table, which incorporates a plunger chute on the right and an unguarded drain path on the far left.

Video Pinball includes two difficulty levels; the harder one adds two more drains at the bottom of the playfield. There are four variations, two solitaire and two head-to-head. However you decide to play, you can have the multipliers reset after each ball or let them amass through the course of the game, producing higher scores.

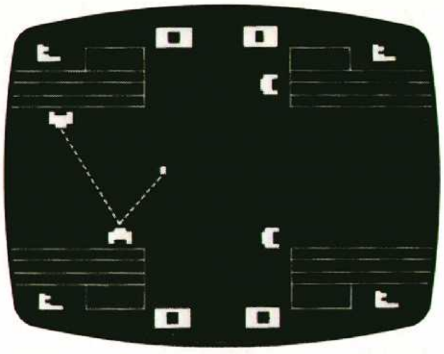
The main goal should be to surround the diamond-shaped drop targets located at the top of the screen. Eliminating all three earns 300 points, and even better, ups the multiplier on the 100-point thumper-bumpers by one.

WARLORDS

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Ball-and-Paddle
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Average
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Warlords places the gamer in a medieval setting where the object is to batter down the walls of the opponent's castles and slay the monarchs inside. If a gamer winds up becoming the last surviving warlord, he'll earn himself a point, and if he wins five such battles, will go on to win an overall victory.



WIZARD OF WOR

CBS Videogames
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Like the other home editions of the Midway coin-op, this *Wizard of Wor* cartridge is fun to play solo, but an absolute blast when two gamers get together to try it at the same time. Each player controls a warrior, which is moved around a maze with the joystick, and fires with a touch of the action button. Moving through the maze are a variety of hostile creatures, including some invisible ones that must be tracked on the secondary "radar" display, located just beneath the main one.

The nasties are basically trying to trample the heroes underfoot. If the entire maze is cleared, there is a chance for a series of bonus encounters, including one with the evil wizard (who shoots first and asks questions later).

YARS' REVENGE

Atari
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

In *Yars' Revenge*, not only should the accompanying instructions be read, but so should the excellent comic book that comes in the package. The intro recounts the saga of the Yars, a peace-loving insectoid nation, whose main object, as well as the gamer's, is to protect their planet from the relentless attack of the dreaded Qotile. The Qotiles are no pushovers, so you must be especially prepared when taking them on.

The comic book intro gives the game a strong context, making the human player a character in a sci-fi space opera, while the play mechanic is easy to learn.

COLECOVISION

CARNIVAL

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is the definitive video shooting gallery, inspired by the type of multi-target extravanganzas that used to be commonplace in carnivals and large game parlors not so many years ago. The player uses an on-screen gun, which can be moved from side to side with the joystick, to fire at ducks, rabbits, owls, pipes and other traditional marks. Failure to dispose of the ducks before they get too low on the screen can reduce the shooter's bullet supply, because the bird will seemingly come to life and make a meal of the valuable projectiles.

Bonuses and penalties, either points or bullets, appear periodically in boxes located toward the top of the playfield. Sometimes, snagging extra ammo in this fashion is the only way to avoid running out and bringing the game to a premature ending.

COSMIC AVENGER

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Take command of a highly maneuverable rocket plane and try to run the gauntlet of this cartridge's three exciting scenarios. You start by flying over a city bristling with anti-aircraft guns and rockets, continue by dueling with tanks on the ground, assisted by UFOs in the sky, and finish up with an undersea journey made perilous by submarines, submerged batteries, mines and more. Getting through in one piece starts the process over, but this time at a higher difficulty setting.

The cartridge offers four levels of skill, each considerably more arduous than the last. *Cosmic Avenger* gives each player a three- or five-ship squadron, depending on the skill level, and novices will need all the aircraft they can get.

DONKEY KONG

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

As Mario the intrepid maintainence man, you must climb the ladders of the first screen to get to where a giant ape holds your girl friend captive. To continue pursuit of the gorilla on the second screen, Mario must remove the bolts which hold Donkey Kong's perch in place. Finally, if Mario successfully negotiates the elevators of the third play screen, he frees the kidnap victim and starts once again at a higher skill level.

Mario can deal with hazards, such as the barrels which roll along the girders of the half-completed skyscraper during the opening scenario, in two ways. He can either jump over them by hitting the action button or smash them with one of the hammers placed strategically around the playfield.

LADY BUG

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Lady Bug offers a combination of maze-chase strategy and pinball-type scoring. You must move your lady bug through the maze to collect the dots while avoiding any contact with the deadly, though stationary, skulls or the equally lethal, but mobile, insects. The lady bug has a powerful weapon in the form of the ability to move turnstiles built into the playfield that alters the shape of the maze corridors at will.

The bonus point system is straight out of the world of flipper games. Spelling out the words "Special" or "Extra" confers, respectively, a bushel of points or an extra lady bug, and there are also 2x, 3x and 5x bonus multipliers.

Lady Bug gives more scope for strategy than many other maze chase contests, and it's not quite as dependent on hand-eye coordination than most other titles within this genre.

MOUSE TRAP

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A special overlay which slips over the ColecoVision controller's keypad enables the arcader to open and close the on-screen, color coded gates in such a way as to reshape the maze-playfield and thwart the pursuing kittens. Eating one of the four bones gives the mouse the ability to turn into a ferocious dog which can turn the tables on the felines. This transformation is accomplished by hitting the appropriate spot on the keypad. A hawk capable of flying over the maze walls to catch the mouse is another danger threatening your rodent. One possible tactic is to duck into the labyrinth's center square, which instantly transfers you to one of the four corners, safely out of harm's way.

SMURF (Rescue)

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $30.50
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is every arcader's opportunity to experience life as part of a Saturday morning cartoon. The object is to run and jump through the dangers along the route to Gargamel's Castle and, once there, rescue the Smurfette who is held prisoner. Most of the play-action involves jumping over obstacles that get in the hero's way on the journey along the paths and through the bat-infested cavern to the forbidding castle.

Smurf Rescue is simple enough for the youngest arcaders at its most basic skill setting, but can challenge any adult at the higher levels. The ability to duck under things as well as jump over them is a particularly intriguing feature of this cartridge.

TURBO

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $64.90
Category: Driving
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Owing largely to the special controller and the beautiful multi-scenario playfield, *Turbo* is the hands-down champion of first-person video driving games. The driver must deftly control gas pedal, gearshift and steering wheel to keep the vehicle hurtling through a wide variety of scenery at as high a speed as possible, passing cars and toting up the mileage. An ambulance appears at intervals, heralded by the appropriate siren, and the arcader must quickly move his auto to the side of the road or risk a collision with the onrushing emergency vehicle.

The graphics are a little blockier than those on the original Sega coin-op machine, but there's enough variety to satisfy just about any gamer. The program combines visual elements to generate a constantly unfolding landscape. This makes *Turbo* nearly as much fun to watch as it is to play, which is saying something.

VENTURE

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $33.95
Category: Action Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Four different floors, each with a selection of four to five rooms, await the coming of that bold bowman Winky. The arcader uses the stick to move an on-screen cursor around a floor plan of the level. The screen automatically switches to a display of a room whenever the cursor passes through a doorway. Each chamber has a treasure and is guarded by a specific type of creature. The idea is to enter the room, fight or dodge the guardians and escape with the prize. Depending on which of the four skill settings is chosen, each arcader has a team of three or five Winky's, available one at a time, with which to try this fascinating treasure hunt.

Sound and graphics of this cartridge, based on a coin-op by Exidy, are among its greatest strengths. Not only does each room have a different monster, but there is a special musical theme associated with each type of creature.

ZAXXON

ColecoVision
Coleco
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

With its diagonally-oriented playfields, *Zaxxon* provides the player with a more realistic simulation of movement in three-dimensional space than any other home videogame. The player must use a supersonic fighter to launch a strafing attack against two sky fortresses. These mighty installations are located in deep space in an area patrolled heavily by alien warbirds, so the arcader will also have to survive a futuristic dogfight (which falls between the two sky fortress scenarios) before coming to grips with the giant robot Zaxxon itself.

Those who found it difficult to learn the steering control scheme on the Sega coin-op will find the easiest of the cartridge's four skill levels ideal for practice. The harder levels introduce more distractions designed to keep the player from just bringing the plane down to the deck level of the fortress unmolested.

INTELLIVISION

ABPA BACKGAMMON

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

A helpful instruction booklet provides some of the basic rules of the game as well as how to use the game program. Keypad controls which man is moved by which dice count. Two skill levels are provided to play against the computer or human head-to-head matchups are possible. Tapping disc moves cursor from man to man and beep prevents illegal moves. Side buttons provide a pip count at any time during play.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Gamer controls three mobile adventurers through mountains, rivers, forests and walls to find both halves of the ancient crown of kings. There are four skill levels. Keypad is used to fire arrows, exit mountains, check arrow supply, pick up objects, while side buttons make the man run when used with disc. Using direction disc alone makes him walk in the direction pushed. Tools that can be picked up along the way to aid in the journey are boats, axes and keys. Monsters that try to keep the adventurer from reaching his destination include bats, spiders, rats, snakes, blobs, demons, dragons and winged dragons.

ARMOR BATTLE

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

There are four battle speeds. Side buttons move tank forward and shoot, while disc controls direction of movement or shot. There are two tanks on the screen at the beginning of each battle and each player has a battery of 50 tanks apiece. Wage war until one player has zero remaining or set a specific number for victory. Mines can be laid without the other player knowing it, but you could be blown up with your own mine. There are 240 different battle fields. There are roads, buildings, water and woods to make each battle a unique test of skill and strategy.

ASTROSMASH

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Target

Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Gamer is a laser battery commander forced to sit at the bottom of the screen and shoot down rocks, spinners, missiles and UFOs with only a laser and horizontal movement as defense. Not only are each of the above targets worth a varying amount of points, depending on which of the six levels you are on, but each target subtracts a certain number of points if allowed to hit the ground. All four side buttons are used to fire single shots at the falling debris, or the UFO that sails across the upper portion of the screen, but the keypad also contains auto fire mode where three shots will be fired a second time, without hitting the side buttons. There is also a hyperspace method of avoiding guided missiles.

ATLANTIS

Imagic
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Gamer controls a pair of anti-aircraft guns and a sentinel saucer to defend Atlantis from attacks of Gorgon fleet. Game is played in three stages: daylight, dusk and night. At night, gamer can only see attackers when spotlights are on them. Points for scoring hits are progressively higher at each successive level. When firing guns, a cross-hair sight controlled by the direction disc is used to guide missiles. Shot will go to cross-hair and destroy anything in its path. There are three levels of play. Top side buttons fire left gun and bottom buttons fire right gun. Buttons are also used to fire when saucer is launched.

AUTO RACING

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $25.65
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Poor
Overall Rating: 7

There are five different courses available and five different types of cars, each with different qualities of top speed, acceleration and handling. Disc is used to steer in the perspective of the driver and not the gamer. When the car needs to turn right, the disc must be pressed on the right side. Side buttons are used to brake or to return to one of the course's checkpoints after a crash. Time is kept in the solitaire runs. In head-to-head runs, the goal is points instead of laps completed. When one car gets too far ahead for both cars to be shown on the same screen, a point is awarded and both cars return to the last checkpoint. Points are awarded when your opponent crashes, which lends these two-driver conflicts to become Grand Prix demolition derbies.

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B-17 BOMBER

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $43.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent*
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8
**Uses Intellivoice*

There are six levels to the game with a different payload and varying difficulty of enemy defenses. First, gamer can preview targets. Then he can set his destination and prepare for take-off. Once aloft, he can open bomb bay doors to see view from below the plane or see view from the cockpit with readings in pitch, altitude and velocity. There is even a navigator's view. Bandits appear to shoot down gamer's plane. Gamer is alerted by voice telling location of bandits. Score points by getting home safely after successfully completing bombing run.

BEAUTY & THE BEAST

Imagic
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Buford must climb a very tall building to rescue tiny Mable from the clutches of Horrible Hank. He can jump over boulders or rats, but must find an area where bats or birds will fly over him. Boulders only fall at certain locations. Buford must scale buildings by waiting for windows to open and climbing through them to get to the next level. When he reaches Hank and Mabel, they both go even higher. There is a second screen showing how far up you've gone on the building, plus an airplane will fly over giving you a message. Mabel throws down hearts to Buford, and when he catches them he becomes invincible for a short time and can smash all his adversaries. Good graphic surprise when you reach the top of the building.

BOMB SQUAD

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $43.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding*
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10
**Uses Intellivoice*

Gamer must disarm a bomb by guessing the code number or by repairing a circuit board that will make guessing the code number either easier or a certainty. There are three skill levels and from one to three numbers in the bomb's code. Keypad is used to select tools (cutters, pliers, soldering iron, fire extinguisher) to fix circuits, aided by side buttons and direction disc and the voice of Frank, the demolition expert, who'll guide you through each step. Points are gained by doing successful circuit work, guessing the code numbers and disarming the bomb.

BOXING

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

There are six different types of fighters available, including a strong offensive choice, strong defense, exceptional endurance and an unpredictable fighter who is different every time out. Disc moves fighter around the ring. Keypad is used to punch, feint, duck, and pull punches. Side buttons are not used here. Knockouts, knockdowns, and a computer referee to keep track of the points are all features. Programs provides most of the sound effects heard at ringside.

CARNIVAL

Coleco
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $30.00
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

All the classic elements of a country fair shoot-out. There are ducks, bunnies, owls, pipes, bonus targets and letters, extra bullet targets and an ammunition supply. Value of targets depends on what the target is and on what level it's located when hit. If the gamer knocks down all the targets and eliminates the pipes, he moves on to the bear rack, where the bear earns extra points when hit, but also becomes a much more elusive target.

CHECKERS

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

There are five different options depending on whether gamer is playing against computer, at what skill level, who moves first or if playing against a human opponent. Disc controls direction of the cursor when selecting a man to move and then moves that man. Computer can suggest a move if needed and when playing against the computer, there are two skill levels.

DEMON ATTACK

Imagic
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 10

Gamer can choose between one-player, two-player competitive and co-operative modes at four different game variations. Scenario one has gamer using laser cannon to defend the moon. Each time you stave off six waves of eight demons each, the space ship launches into the air to go on the offensive against the demon's mother ship. There the gamer must fight dive-bombing attackers and then shoot through a window of vulnerability and into the core of pandemonium to destroy the ship. When that happens, ship returns to the moon and prepares for the next attack. Music played during trips and at game's end adds to overall package.

DONKEY KONG

Coleco
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $30.00
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

Patterned after the successful arcade classic, Mario is trying to save his girl friend from the clutches of that nasty ape. There are two screen variations, though the second keeps repeating as the ape, the girl, Mario and the scores get higher. There are hammers to smash the barrels the ape keeps throwing, and ladders to help Mario with the climb. On the second level Mario has items of the girl friend's that he can retrieve for bonus points. Three Marios aren't much against this monkey's arsenal.

FROG BOG

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Two frogs sit upon lily pads and have nothing to do but leap into the air and try to grab bugs. The one that gets the most bugs out wins. When time runs out they both go to sleep to digest dinner. Game can be played in day or night mode and with three levels of difficulty. When on the simple level, computer controls tongue and the arc on the jump. Gamer hits disc when he wants to jump. At second level, the position the gamer hits the disc and the length of time he holds the disc will determine whether the frog goes successfully from one pad to another or falls in the pond. If he gets wet he won't get any bugs until he swims out. On third level gamer must control jumper and tongue, using side buttons for the latter.

HORSE RACING

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-6
Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Poor
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 2

Mostly a betting game, even though two players in each race may act as jockeys and have a hand in determining the winner in these four-horse dashes. Side buttons are used to whip or coax the horse under control and the disc is used to put the horse on the rail or move him out to pass. Each horse starts with a clean slate for the 10-race card and each gamer then has $750 to bet on the day. As each race goes by, the horse picks up a past performance to be used to determine the likely winner. Win and exacta bets only allowed. Graphics and sound are quite realistic; too bad the same can't be said for the results.

LAS VEGAS POKER & BLACKJACK

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $15.99
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Poor
Overall Rating: 4

Simulates blackjack, five and seven card stud and five card draw poker. Shifty-eyed dealer first asks for the sum total of each player's pot, then the keypad is used to pick which of the card games will be played. There is also an option to let the dealer pick the game. There is no way to show a player his hand and not let the second player see it, so when two are playing, one player must hide his eyes while the other looks at his hand. Most gambling options of these card games are available here.

LAS VEGAS ROULETTE

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Average
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

All the betting options of a real roulette table are here. Player can select his own stake, up to $9,999. Bets include street, five-number, line, square, straight, horizontal and vertical splits, columns, dozens or halves. Use directional disc to make up to three separate bets per turn of the wheel. Section of simulated wheel turns at the top of the screen and ball rattles around when finished turning, until it drops in. Winning bets flash. Break the bank.

LOCK 'N' CHASE

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 8

Game has four speed variations. Disc controls movement, though clumsily, and side buttons are used to lock doors and help thief get away from the police. Thief must clear the bank vault floor of gold coins and then exit out one of the escape doors. There are four side doors to help the thief avoid capture while still picking up coins. There is a money bonus at the heart of the maze and at each level, there are bonus items to be pocketed. If the gamer gets to 300,000 points, the score returns to zero, but the game remembers how often you reached that goal, up to 60 million points, that is.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $29.99
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 10

Control each of the nine men with all the real baseball options, steal, hit and run, and bunt. Keypad activates man when you move on defense. When on defense, disc is used to move activated player, as well as select the type of pitch. On offense the batter and runners are moved around the bases using the disc. An automatic umpire decides all action at home plate and on the bases. As a minor detraction, there are no fly balls. Everything must be thrown to a base for a putout. Quick reflexes, sound strategy and a real good baseball sense are all necessary for a nine-inning win.

MATH FUN

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Kideo
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Speed and accuracy in solving mathematical problems is the key to helping the gorilla get past the animals that block his path. Keypad selects number of problems and difficulty. When gamer is correct with the answer, the gorilla scoots around the animal in his path. When he's wrong, the gorilla must dive into the water to get past and then must answer another problem correctly to get back on land. There are 18 levels of difficulty. Higher levels provide adults a real challenge also.

MICROSURGEON

Imagic
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Those who always wanted to keep doctor's hours and collect doctor's pay without eight years or more of college, here's the chance. There are 197 different patients who need your specialized microsurgery technique, which is performed by means of a robot probe. Accurate depictions of the brain, heart, lung, liver, kidney, gall bladder, spleen and intestines are included. Robot moves with circulatory and lymphatic systems. To stray outside would be to risk

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than intuition or logic. Obstacles include rolling barrels, scorpions, snakes, holes, quicksand, bottomless pits and crocodiles. Some of these hazards take one of Pitfall Harry's lives, and some only take away points. For those who get far enough, there are treasures to help replace or add to lost points. Disc controls Harry's movement across the screen. Side buttons cause Harry to jump. Hitting the bottom of the disc will allow Harry to release the rope when he swings across the pits and drop safely to Earth.

REVERSI

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

Three skill levels, three game variations and three board sizes add variety to game. Object of game is to cover the board with as many pieces as possible of your color. Game can go until board is filled or to a time limit. Disc controls cursor movement to place pieces at desired locations on the board.

SEA BATTLE

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Build a fleet with eight different types of boats and try to get one of two types into the opponent's harbor. Fleets of three or less ships navigate the waters and enter battle with opponent's fleets. Dual screen presentation gives view of entire sea playfield and then a close-up of battle scene. Each ship has different strengths and weaknesses. Side buttons used to aim and fire guns. Disc guides ships and keypad is used to form fleets, engage battles or retreat. Player can lay mines, sweep mines or run aground. Fast moving strategy game.

SNAFU

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Line Building
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

There are two types of games, bite and trap, and both have enough variations to create 16 different types of play. Keypad is used to select variation and then disc controls direction of trails or serpents. At any one of the four speeds, the trap games have as an object, running the opponent into the side of the playfield or into another trail. The variations include whether there is diagonal movement possible, whether there are any other obstacles on the screen and whether a trail disappears after getting hit. In the bite game, each player controls a serpent which tries to eat up the other. Music background is a real plus.

SPACE ARMADA

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Standard *Space Invaders* game. Gamer is given four rows of monsters, six laser guns and three bunkers. Game can be played in game or practice mode with all four buttons of firing and the control button used to guide horizontal movement at bottom of screen. Targets have increased point values at each level. At the higher levels the attackers are given more powerful types of ammunition and start the wave from a lower portion of the screen. Hitting the flying saucer that moves across the top of the screen will restore the most damaged bunkers and give a point total between 1 and 32 times the number level of play at the time of the hit.

SPACE BATTLE

Mattel
Intellivision Standard
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

One of the first dual-screen games and still a solid program. Gamer must use three squadrons to protect the mother ship from five alien squads at any of four skill levels. When game begins the radar screen is shown with the mother ship in the middle. Alien forces are shown closing in, but the gamer must decide which alien group to attack first and send a squadron out to meet it. From radar, the keypad can be switched to a command screen view from one of the squadron's ships. If more than one battle is taking place at a time, the computer will fight one battle for you, probably at great loss. Buttons are used to fire lasers and direction disc controls aim. Ships are sent into battle, assigned or returned to ship by keypad.

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SPACE HAWK

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Average
Overall Rating: 5

Another space target shoot-out with bubbles, hawks and comets as targets, at any one of six levels and at four different speeds. One novel idea is that gamer controls a person in space rather than a rather impersonal ship. Keypad chooses auto-fire or single-shot mode, drift or direct drive, smooth or quick aiming and hyperspace. Top button fires ray gun and bottom provides rocket thrust. Direction disc aims hunter.

SPACE SPARTANS

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $43.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding*
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

attack from white blood cells. There is a patient status chart which will give the patient's number, his overall status, the location of the robot probe within the body and the condition of each area. When the probe's power is used up or the patient dies, the game is over and the point total is given in money earned, depending on how much you improved the condition of the patient. There are three levels of difficulty and game can be played as a team using both controllers.

NASL SOCCER

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Scrolling playfield earns high marks for this program. There are four levels of play and an overtime option if the score is tied after regulation time. Buttons control all shooting, passing and goalie movement. Direction disc used to move player under control. Computer controls other players. When one player goes off the screen at one edge, he reappears on the opposite edge, a good thing to remember when trying to pass the ball quickly upfield. Sound effects galore, including the whack of a kick, the referee's whistle, the crowd's roar and a buzzer that sounds to indicate the end of the period.

NBA BASKETBALL

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $25.65
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Three-man teams play at any of four speeds. On offense gamer controls player with the ball, on defense usually the player nearest the ball when a change of possession takes place. Keypad is used to pass the ball to a particular area of the court. Computer does its best to get a player to where the pass is headed. Two types of shots are available off the keypad; jump and set. The latter is more accurate, but also harder to get off. There is also a block key. Side buttons aren't used. Disc controls player movement. Sound effects are the bouncing of the ball, the hitting of the ball on the rim, whistles, buzzers and crowd cheers. High percentage penalty for outside gunning.

NFL FOOTBALL

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Combines strategy with almost arcade-like reflex moves. There are four levels of play. Each team has five players. On offense gamer controls the quarterback, unless he passes, at which time he will take over control of the intended receiver. There are nine formations on offense and on defense. On the defensive alignments, the player that the gamer controls is marked in the playbook. There are 15 minutes to each quarter. Crowd cheers mingle with referee's whistle, hikes, guns and even a rousing *Charge!* at the start of each half. Hike, kick, and pass by using the side buttons, while the direction disc is used to move the the player under control.

NHL HOCKEY

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Would have been better with a scrolling screen like *NASL Soccer*. One set of buttons controls shooting, one passing. There are four speeds. On offense, player with puck is controlled by player, others by computer. On defense player controls captain. Disc controls player movement. Referee won't be seen on the screen, but try tripping your opponent and you'll likely hear his whistle and be banished to the penalty box. There are three skaters and a goalie per side. Goalie is computer-controlled.

NIGHT STALKER

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Direction disc controls movement of the man who roams the halls of this maze surrounded by danger. There are bats, spiders and robots trying to rid the gamer of five men he is given. Points are awarded for knocking out any of these adversaries. Keypad controls direction of shots. Man can move and shoot, but not at the same time. A second shot can't be attempted until the first hits its target or vanishes from the screen. There are four speeds to select and five different types of robots to deal with. When six shots have been used from the gun, another must be found -- and quickly.

PBA BOWLING

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $25.65
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4
Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

First of all there is a regular bowling game available or a "make that spare" option. Other options include slickness of alley, weight of ball and left or right hand. Player taps disc to pick up ball. Left hand side buttons of controller position the kegler along the starting line. Lower right button starts an aiming ball going across the lane's spotter marks. When that button is released bowler will begin his approach. Disc is then used to apply the amount of curve needed. Pin action is realistic. Pick-up rotation of ball by looking for the holes as it rolls down the lane. Life-like sound effects include a musical salute for a 200 game or a score of 75 in spares.

PGA GOLF

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4
Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

The same nine-hole course can get boring time after time without variations like different pin and tee placement. Game could also use a close-up of green. Yet graphics carry the load. There are nine clubs to choose from. Disc aims swing, side buttons enable golfer to hook or slice the ball if timing is right. Honor system is used to decide which golfer goes first and player furthest from hole is always up. Bunkers, trees and water hazards make life difficult. Trajectory of shot must clear height of trees or program will begin to sound like a lumberjack convention.

PITFALL

Activision
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Not truly an adventure in the traditional sense. Requires more arcade-type skills

**Uses Intellivoice*

Easily the most complex game in space. A listing of the ship's systems will give clues, battle computer, impulse drive, shields, tracking computer, hyperdrive, etc. Keypad can also be used to get condition of all systems, report on energy level and the number of aliens present in your ship's sector, repair systems, and change from a sector grid to a battle view. Included are four voices; a male voice of the central computer, a female voice as the ship's computer, a robot voice as the starbase computer and the alien commander's voice declaring an end to the battle. Gamer must protect his starbase, eliminate aliens and capture alien starbase.

STAMPEDE

Activision
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $23.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

To round up and rope four types of cattle is the aim of this cowpoke. He is allowed to let only three critters get past him before the game is over. All except the Black Angus run in the same direction as the cowboy and can be rounded up quite effectively. The Angus' don't move, so they come across the screen quite fast and must be roped. Roping is done by hitting the side buttons, and the cowboy's horse is moved up and down the screen by means of the direction disc. Rounding up is done by nudging the animals with the horse and hitting the side buttons. Points are awarded for roping.

STAR STRIKE

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Based loosely upon Luke Skywalker's heroic mission in "Star Wars," gamer must fly his ship through the trench in an alien launch station and successfully bomb all five red targets in that trench. At the same time he must dodge fire from alien ships behind him and blast those ahead of him. Each hit the ship takes damages some feature of its arsenal. Radar beeps let gamer know of approaching target, but damage to ship could wipe out radar. Shadow under the ship gives game added three-dimensional flavor and lets gamer know his approximate altitude. One detraction is that if you don't get all five targets or you crash, your point total is zero.

SUB HUNT

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

As the commander of four submarines, the object here is to sink six convoys of six ships apiece before they can reach their home port and attack yours, or before they can sink your submarines. There really are three screens that work here. One is a long-range screen that shows each submarine and a single dot to represent the convoy. When close enough for an attack, battle stations are sounded and a more detailed screen appears. On both screens the top third is taken up by a view of things through a periscope and gauges for speed, depth, direction and torpedoes loaded. Keypad controls speed, depth, sonar and some movement of subs. Direction disc controls rudder. Top side buttons are for firing and bottom buttons reverse engines.

TENNIS

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

A more detailed recreation of the net sport would be hard to imagine, yet this entry suffers from being a bit too difficult to master even on the lower levels of play. Also, the playfield needs to be a bit smaller as it isn't uncommon for the players to leave the screen almost entirely, making it even more difficult to line up the shot. After using the keypad to select difficulty of play, the pad is only used to select the area of serve. Strokes, and there are two varieties, are made with side buttons. Program keeps track of score, even to the point of a tie breaker and crowd in background moves its head from side-to-side to follow the ball.

TRIPLE ACTION

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Combat/Racing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Average
Overall Rating: 3

Contains three games, *Battle Tanks, Car Racing* and *Biplanes.* In all three games the disc controls direction of movement. Top side buttons either fire gun or accelerate depending on the game chosen. Bottom buttons move tank or plane or brake the car. *Battle Tanks* features four different types of shells and a never-changing battlefield. *Car Racing* can be solo or side-by-side. The object is to get 100 miles in the shortest possible time on a two-lane road, with all the idiot drivers in the world in your path. *Biplane* has an object of scoring 15 points first, by either shooting down your opponent's plane or scoring a hit on the balloon on the screen.

TRON DEADLY DISCS

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Game features Tron against the warrior attackers. Keypad is used to switch from move to block modes and back again, and also acts as a direction pad for firing the discs. Side buttons aren't used. Four levels of play available. Tron can take three hits for each wave of warriors. Warriors are destroyed with one hit, but come back every 10 seconds. To get a new life for Tron you must wipe out the warriors in 10 seconds. Three other foes are bulldogs, leaders and guards. Each is more difficult to destroy, but worth more points when Tron succeeds. There is also the dangerous recognizer that Tron destroys with yellow discs. Nice feature enables Tron to call disc back to his hand quickly, once he sees that a shot will be off target.

U.S. SKI TEAM SKIING

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-6

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

There are 15 different levels of competition on two ski courses. Upper action buttons are for the edge feature, which allows skiers to make sharper turns. Lower action buttons jump moguls. Direction disc is utilized to turn the skier clockwise or counterclockwise. Downhill and slalom are the two courses, with the latter being the most difficult. Each skier gets three heats to post the fastest time. Memorizing the course here is crucial. There is the whoosh sound of getting down the hill fast, along with the thumps of falling in the snow, the crashes of hitting a tree and the boing of hitting a flag.

UTOPIA

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Player wins this outing by making the inhabitants of the island Utopia as happy and contented as possible. There are only two islands on the screen, so head-to-head play is the best way to go. Each player gets gold bars to buy forts, factories, acres of crops, schools, hospitals, housing projects, PT boats and fishing boats. There are several hazards in the game, like your opponent's rebel soldiers, rain, tropical storms and pirate ships. Direction disc controls cursor and boats. Side buttons provide running total of points and population.

WORD FUN

Mattel
Standard Intellivision
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Kideo
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Helps teach children how to put together letters to form words. There are four levels of play in each of the three game variations; *Crosswords*, *Word Hunt* and *Word Rockets*. *Crosswords* is a scrabble in miniature. *Word Hunt* features monkeys capturing letters to form words while racing against another person or against time. *Word Rockets* shoots vowels between two consonants to complete words. First to complete 50 words wins. Entertaining for both young and old.

ODYSSEY^2

ALIEN INVADERS — PLUS

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This game makes excellent use of the invasion game concept to produce a cartridge that's different enough to satisfy the public's ever-growing need for diversity and challenge. The gamer uses a joystick to move a horizontally-mobile laser cannon — and its robot gunner — back and forth across the bottom of the playfield. Directly overhead is a line of eight evil robots, each operating a gun and protected by an impenetrable shield. The gamer wins a round in the ongoing war against the aliens by clearing the entire playfield of enemy robots. When one side racks up 10 victories, the war is over and trumpets salute the victor!

ALPINE SKIING

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

The cartridge is capable of generating over 195,000 different snow swept courses to test the skiing skill of one or two players. Swoop down the slope using your joystick to control the on-screen athlete, while also avoiding trees and trying to cut every possible corner to reduce your elapsed time. An on-screen clock ticks off during each run and measures down to 0.1 second.

BASEBALL

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This is an absolutely classic two-player sports simulation that balances all the key elements of the national pastime: hitting, pitching, fielding, and running. No single aspect of the sport dominates in this one. Features include pitch selection, movable outfielders and stretching hits for extra bases — which all combine to create a thoroughly enjoyable race for the pennant.

BASKETBALL

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: 4
Overall Rating: 6

The world's most popular sport meets the granddaddy of all videogames in this *Pong*-style sports contest. Two players hit the ball (a cursor) back and forth and attempt to sink baskets. This is far below current state-of-the-art, but as a two-fer with *Bowling*, it isn't a bad investment for the price.

BLOCKOUT/BREAKDOWN

Odyssey^2
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Wall-Bashing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Despite having to control the action with a joystick instead of a paddle, this is a pretty good wall-bashing (and building) game for one or two players. A nice touch is that the computer is willing to handle either side during solitaire play.

In *Blockout*, players use blockbusters (balls) to chop through a multicolored target wall, one block at a time. Gamers must beware of the target's defenses, which can magically rebuild previously demolished blocks. The player has only 90 seconds to clear a path to the top of the playfield.

In *Breakdown*, the point is to obliterate an entire wall in just 60 seconds. This isn't as difficult as it sounds, since the blockbuster doesn't stop after pulverizing the first block it hits. Instead, it continues to wreak havoc until the player is unable to make it ricochet off the power bar.

PROGRAMMABLES

BOWLING

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

This is one of two programs on Odyssey's cartridge #9404 (see *Basketball*), and as such, it probably represents a bargain. You can throw a straight ball or a curve from either end of the alley, and it is possible to pick up a variety of spares if your first roll doesn't down all 10 pins.

Bowling is more serviceable than spectacular, but it does provide lots of pin-bashing fun, if you're willing to give up a few frills like a regulation frame-by-frame scoreboard.

CONQUEST OF THE WORLD

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Diplomatic
Number of Players: 2-6

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Two to six players, each representing the leader of one of the game's 43 countries, strive to make their homeland the most powerful nation on the face of the Earth. This goal is accomplished by accumulating more power base units than any other country.

The diplomatic in-fighting takes place on a map board provided with the game. Whenever trouble breaks out, action switches to the video screen. Each country musters land, sea and air combat units, which square off in a series of one-on-one showdowns. Players can employ any of three armed services, with the only restriction being that once a specific type of military force has failed in one engagement of the war, it can't be used again in the same war.

COSMIC CONFLICT

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This solitaire triumph casts the player in the role of the captain of a spaceship, cruising a galaxy filled with tempting targets and merciless enemy starfighters. Pledged to stop the invading fleet from destroying our corner of the universe, your mission is to eliminate the 10 transports and five guarding starfighters before expanding your ship's energy supply.

CRYPTOLOGIC

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Word
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

A variant of hangman, *Cryptologic* requires one gamer to encode words or phrases, while the other player attempts to dope it out, letter by letter. The person who deciphers the message in the fewest number of tries is the winner.

ELECTRONIC TABLE SOCCER

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This electronic version features six on-screen athletes per team; three midfielders, two strikers and a goalie. Each of the joystick's three horizontal positions — left, right and center — establishes control over a different column of players. Vertical movement of the stick causes the appropriate line of players to move from sideline to sideline. Coaches pass and shoot by hitting the action button and pointing the joystick in the desired direction.

FOOTBALL

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 7

The lack of a scrolling playfield is sure to annoy football purists, but this arcade-style pigskin cartridge will definitely delight the "less than fanatical" gamer.

The offense can run and pass, while the defense has the job of rushing the passer and shadowing deep receivers. Since the field is so small, there's no provision for a first down. A coach must guide his team across the goal line in four plays or cough up the ball to the other side. The number of offensive and defensive options is also more limited, but on the plus side, coaches *can* set formations before each play!

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 8

Gamers are placed in the cockpit of an Earth Federation starship with a specific mission: rescue as many terrane captives as possible while dodging enemy drone-mines and pulsar warships. A rescue operation always counts more heavily, point-wise, than blowing up things will. The main idea is to free the captive Earthlings while attempting to avoid the potential obliteration of your own ship!

GOLF

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $20.00
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Dual playfields distinguish this sports simulation which pits the gamer's tiny on-screen golfer against a pleasingly varied nine-hole course. Holes include such expected links obstacles as water and rough.

Once a golfer reaches the green, the screen shifts from an overview of the entire hole to a close-up of the green.

After the little golfer has had a particularly inept shot, he'll bash his club up and down on the ground in a raging fury. (Now does this sound like anyone *you* know)?

HOCKEY

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This remarkably authentic simulation faithfully mimics the pace, the action and even the *feel* of the genuine game. Each arcader coaches a regulation six-man team through three frenetic five-minute periods, filled with enough action to satisfy the most demanding puck-chasers.

The joystick moves the goalie up and down in front of the net, while maneuvering the skater closest to the puck across the square, unzoned rink. The defensive player should check both ends of the ice, and worry about the goalie's position only when the opposing team has a chance for a direct shot. On offense, scoring depends on keeping the puck in motion until there's finally a chance for a goal-scoring shot.

INVADERS FROM HYPERSPACE

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 6

Gamers are transported to a time when interstellar warfare is a way of life. Each four-planet system is under constant attack from alien saucers, with a pair of player-controlled battle cruisers the only effective defense. The winner is the first player to destroy 10 saucers with a battle cruiser. If the saucers overrun all eight planets — admittedly, an unlikely event — then the machine has defeated both human players.

Despite colorful visuals and exciting sound effects, it's just not the sort of game that holds up well under repeated play.

K.C. MUNCHKIN

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.00
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Gamers maneuver the munchkin around a maze, using a joystick to scoop up the 12 munchies before one of the three munchers can gulp down our hero to end the game. It's possible to scroll horizontally using the corridor of the maze that opens to the left and right edges of the screen.

Eating the munchies strengthens the munchkin enough to turn the tables on his tormentors. Clearing the entire maze causes it to be replenished by another screen at a higher level of difficulty.

A good feature is that the arcader can custom-design a maze using simple keystroke commands.

LAS VEGAS BLACKJACK

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

This card game cartridge plays the well-loved gambling game, blackjack — or "21" as its sometimes called — with one or two participants competing with a computer-controlled dealer. Each card player starts with a mythical stake of $1,000 and is free to wager on every hand as it is bet. The machine keeps track of the winnings and losings.

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Lunar Lander
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A colorful and entertaining lunar-lander game, *Out of this World* is perfect for novices to the sport of videogaming.

This two-player contest challenges arcaders to land a spacecraft on the moon's surface, take off again, and ultimately dock with its mothership. Pressing the action button on the joystick fires the retro-rockets that make gentle landings possible and also provide the thrust for take-off.

Three variants allow progressively more demanding levels of play in this fun, but basic, beginners videogame.

PACHINKO

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Even those who don't ordinarily like the Oriental version of pinball will find this head-to-head variation on the theme fairly entertaining. There isn't as much control of on-the-playfield events as occurs even in a pinball game, let alone the usual videogame, but it's fun to watch the balls skitter around and rack up points.

Not that there isn't some strategy. You must time the launch of each ball carefully so that you get the highest possible score for each bounce — and avoid the robot Troubleshooter, which scoops up your balls and gives them to your opponent.

PICK AXE PETE

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Gamers direct Pete, a grizzled old prospector, on a multi-level journey through a series of shafts to the top of a mine.

The tricky part is that the ladders on each level periodically appear and disappear. The ultimate object is for the gamer to scale the mine shafts and reach the top of the screen in time to snatch yet another periodically-appearing item — the magic key that enables Pete to descend to the next level, which contains even more riches *and* greater danger.

The graphics, though a little sparse, are quite attractive and engaging.

POCKET BILLIARDS

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This electronic simulation of a full-size pool table permits two gamers to enjoy a nice round of eight ball or rotation pool without leaving the living room. The cue can be rotated a full 360 degrees around the cue ball's position. The length of time the arcader holds down the action button determines whether the resulting shot is a tap or a cannonball.

This cartridge is particularly good for all-family play, because it minimizes any advantages the youngsters may have in the areas of reflexes and hand-eye coordination. The accent here is on meticulous, rather than merely fast, play.

QUEST FOR THE RINGS

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 2-3

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 10

In *Quest for the Rings*, a pair of adventurers explore the countryside of a fantasy kingdom in search of the Ringmaster's 10 mystical rings, which are all hidden beneath some of the 23 castles scattered across the landscape.

When players reach a dungeon on the board, the action moves to the video screen. There, gamers in their chosen roles as wizards, warriors, phantoms or changelings, battle fire-breathing dragons and an assortment of monsters in hopes of retrieving a magic ring.

SHOWDOWN IN 2100 A.D.

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

A futuristic "Old West"-type gunfight, involving two android gunslingers facing each other across a tree-dotted playfield, awaits arcaders in this cartridge. When shooting, the direction of the shot may change when it strikes a tree or one of the playfield borders. Each automaton has six shots, monitored by an on-screen counter, but can reload by touching a tree of the appropriate color. The first android to score 10 kills is the winner!

SPEEDWAY

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Racing
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Speedway is a home electronic version of the typical auto racing contest. Competing against a two-minute limit, the player steers his/her auto down a road to score points, while attempting to avoid time-consuming crashes with oncoming cars. There's a choice of two game speeds, but the slower one's too easy to use, except as a learning tool.

SPINOUT

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Racing
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 8

Spin-Out puts two players against each other in a high-speed race around an enclosed track. There's a good range of game variations for this one: two speeds, two different race lengths and a pair of raceways. Though *Spin-Out* is best when played with two gamers, you can drive solitaire too, playing against the clock.

TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $14.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Each player begins the adventure with a stake of $500,000 in the labyrinthine kingdom of Keynesium. They'll need every penny of it in order to reach the game-winning goal of amassing $1 million, while competing not only against each other, but also against the computer itself!

The idea is to capture the brightly-colored robots as quickly as possible, while keeping the darker ones at arm's length. The playfield maze isn't overly complex, but it's no breeze, either. Although earning a cool million is the stated goal, we advise first-timers to start off with a lower figure.

THE GREAT WALL STREET FORTUNE HUNT

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Money
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Playable either head-to-head or solo, this videogame/boardgame hybrid provides a very thorough simulation of the interrelated factors that make stock market prices dip and soar.

Gamers play on a multi-colored board, on which they can indicate their intention to buy or sell the various stocks. Investment record pads (also for calculating option prices), as well as a couple of sets of share/margin counters help keep track of trading. The main show takes place on the television monitor, however. The upper third of the screen reports the current market price of each of the 27 issues included in the game, the middle of the screen is a facsimile of a newswire which can exert a tremendous effect on the market, and the bottom track gives a report of each investor's portfolio.

THUNDERBALL

Odyssey
Odyssey
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Pinball
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Poor
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 4

This early effort to translate the aesthetics of pinball to the videogaming genre is pretty much unsuccessful at capturing the feel of flipper games. The geometry of the field is totally at variance with actual pinball machines, which makes it hard to mimic the play-action that makes flipper games so fascinating.

UFO

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

As Commander of an Earth Federation star cruiser, the gamer controls a spaceship equipped with laser and shields, in an area of space patrolled by an intergalactic foe.

The enemy can launch three deadly types of weapons: random UFOs (worth one point), hunter-killers (three points), and light-speed starships (10 points). The player must use his shield by ramming, and gun to destroy, as many of these as possible before his ship is obliterated. Accurate steering and pinpoint marksmanship gets you the highest scores in a game where the action just doesn't let up.

VOLLEYBALL

Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Probably the closest approach to the real sport to be found in the videogame world, Odyssey's *Volleyball* successfully escapes the well-known patterns that usually arise when there's only one on-screen bat for each player to use when hitting the ball back and forth. By putting six players on each team, gamers can play a surprisingly realistic contest in this one or two-player extravaganza.

Simple, but clear rendering of the on-screen characters and a good assortment of sync sounds increases the entertainment

WAR OF NERVES

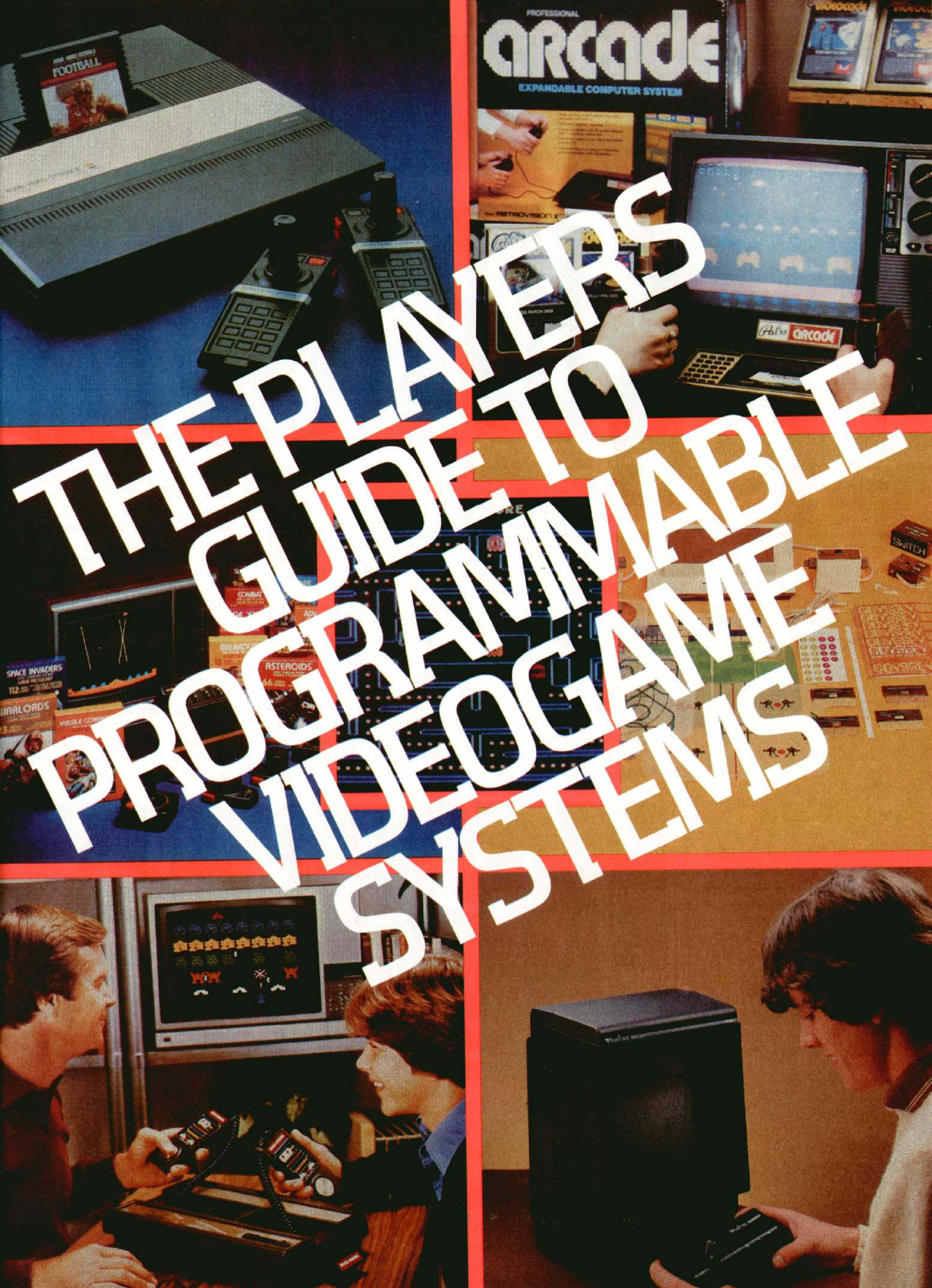
Odyssey^2
Atari VCS
Suggested Retail Price: $22.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

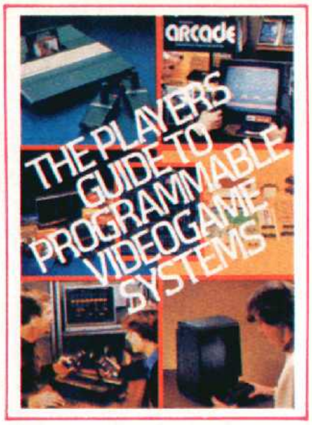
One of the most entertaining electronic war games around, *War of Nerves* comes packed with enough strategic possibilities to keep even armchair generals happy throughout hundreds of on-screen battles.

Each gamer directs an army of robot-soldiers, which move semi-independently across a playfield enlivened with various terrain features.

THE PLAYERS GUIDE TO PROGRAMMABLE VIDEOGAME SYSTEMS


FOOTBALL
PROFESSIONAL
arcade
EXPANDABLE COMPUTER SYSTEM
ASTROVISION
Videocade
Astro arcade
SPACE INVADERS
WARLORDS
MISSILE COMMAND
COMBAT
ASTEROIDS
SWITCH
ODYSSEY

ATARI

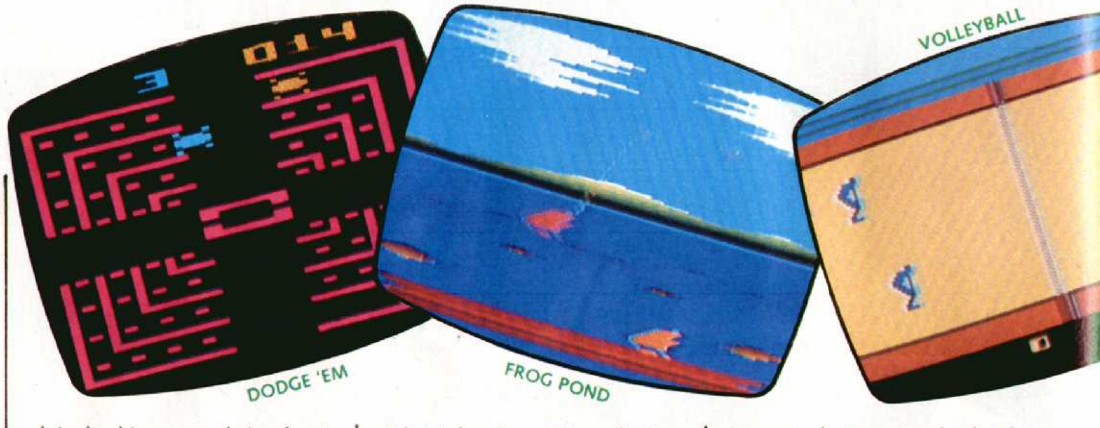


VCS HARDWARE

The Video Computer System (VCS) has become the subject of an increasing amount of debate among electronic gaming enthusiasts of late. Its staunch defenders champion the VCS as the greatest of all the home fun machines. Detractors snipe back that it's a technological relic, an outmoded system that ought to be collecting dust in a closet somewhere.

Yet even amid the din of rising voices, one simple truth remains inescapable. There's no denying it: The Atari VCS is far and away, the most popular home arcade system in the world today. There are more VCS units in use right now than all other brands combined. Software is the same story, thanks to a slew of companies that have jumped at the chance to cater to the huge audience of VCS owners.

Developed in 1978, the VCS—soon to be officially renamed the 2600 by the manufacturer—is a standard programmable videogame system. That means it has low-resolution graphics, a small amount of screen RAM (used to move objects around the display, among other things) and 4K bytes of resident memory. Interestingly, the VCS might've had only 4K of memory on board if hardware designers hadn't convinced the company that it was worthwhile building in the extra capability, even if it wasn't going to be used immediately.



The VCS is ruggedly constructed to withstand anything short of intentional vandalism. Apart from the cartridge slot, the only major feature on the otherwise plain-looking console is a front panel with an array of four vertically moveable slide switches. Grouped in pairs on each side of the slot, these controls govern (from left to right): on/off, color/black & white, game select and game reset.

Older units actually have six slide switches on the front panel. The extra set is a pair of left and right difficulty controls, which have been moved to the back panel next to the game ports. While this makes the difficulty levers a little less convenient on the latest machines, it does prevent accidental mis-setting during play sessions.

Each VCS is packaged with a pair of paddles and a set of two joysticks. With a few exceptions, these are sufficient to play most VCS cartridges. **Indy 500**, a race game, comes with its own special steering controller and several titles utilizing keypad controllers that must be bought separately. (Atari will shortly introduce yet another controller for use with the VCS edition of **Star Raiders**.) All control devices connect to the back of the console with 9-pin plugs.

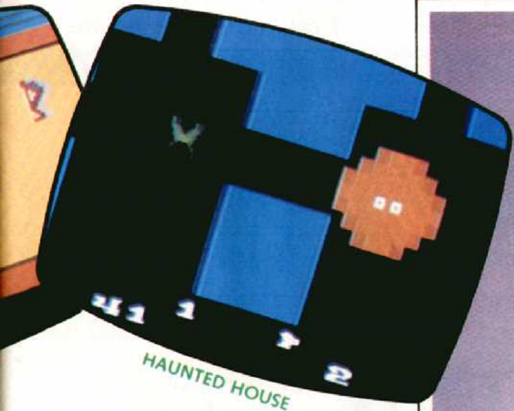
The eight-position joystick is an industry standard. The narrow base is small enough to accommodate all but the smallest hands, and the long shaft provides good leverage. The paddles are satisfactory, if not exceptional.

THE VCS SOFTWARE EXPLOSION

Whatever ivory tower technicians may say, it is impossible to view the VCS as anything but very much alive as long as a dozen or so cartridges reach stores each month. Atari offers over 50 cartridges for the system

SLOT RACERS
HUMAN CANNONBA
SKY DIVER
COMBAT
ODGE 'EM
ADVENTURE
BREAKOUT
NIGHT DRIVER
SPACE INVADERS
ASTEROIDS
VIDEO PIN
WARLORDS
MISSILE COMMAND

VCS: The Most Popular System



HAUNTED HOUSE

VCS SUPERCHARGER AND WICO JOYSTICK

under its own label, and more than 15 independent producers are fielding VCS-compatible cartridge libraries of their own.

Some of the best games include (manufacturers' names are in parentheses):

Berzerk (*Atari*). Clever programming makes this an excellent home version of Stern's much-loved coin-op maze-shoot. The player must shoot his way through a series of rooms populated by hostile robots.

Defender (*Atari*). Another hot commercial arcade game that fares well on the VCS is this Williams-designed scrolling shoot-out. The action is virtually non-stop, and the graphics are surprisingly good.

Demon Attack (*Imagic*). Smooth graphics, multiple menaces and attractive appearance make this one of the very best of all the invasion-type contests. Particularly nice is the fact that some attackers split into two smaller enemies after taking an initial hit from the player's cannon.

Star Master (*Activision*). It's you against a galaxy full of ravening aliens in this space piloting game. This science fiction tour de force boasts both strategic and tactical display screens.

Tennis (*Activision*). Sports games aren't really a prime strength for the VCS, but this clever net cartridge is one of a handful of happy exceptions. The best visual bit is that the ball casts a moving shadow in flight, making it easier to follow its trajectory and line up shots.

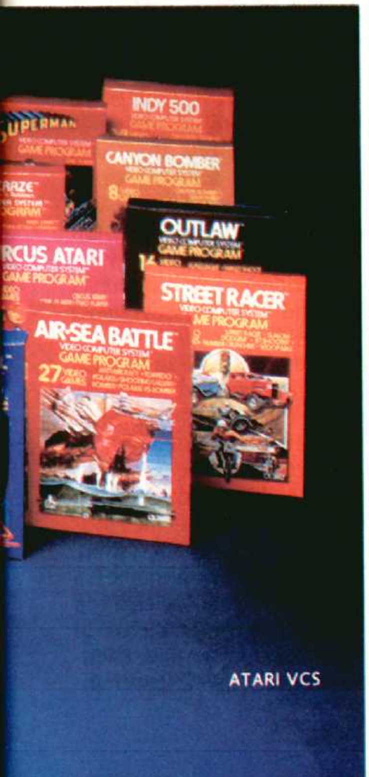
Donkey Kong (*Coleco*). This two-screen version of the Nintendo coin-op captures much of the flavor of this climbing game. Help Mario get to the top and release his girlfriend from the dreaded giant gorilla.

Football (*Mattel*). This M-Network title fills a yawning gap in the VCS line. Skip Atari's pigskin cartridge in favor of this one.

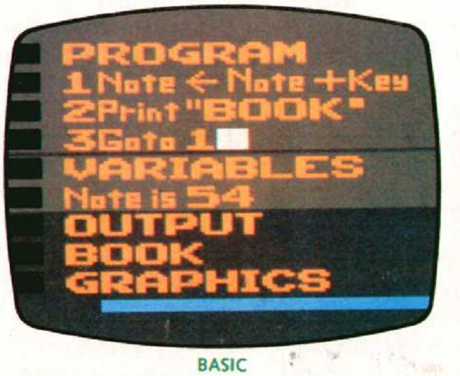
Space Cavern (*Games By Apollo*). You're a space suited figure standing on the floor of a huge cavern on the mysterious planet on which you've just landed. You must use your laser rifle to battle flying monsters from above, and shaggy ones that rush at you from the side.

Commando Raid (*U.S. Games*). You're in charge of an anti-aircraft gun with the job of keeping the paratroopers, dropped by swarming enemy helicopters, from destroying your installation.

Frogger (*Parker Brothers*). No VCS-compatible cartridge has better sound than this one, and the action is nothing to sneeze at, either. Steer your frog across the road and river to a safe haven, but beware of those sneaky diving turtles!



ATARI VCS



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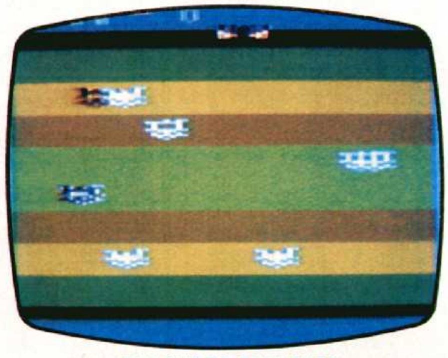
PROGRAM
1Note ← Note + Key
2Print "BOOK"
3Goto 1█
VARIABLES
Note is 54
OUTPUT
BOOK
GRAPHICS
```

BASIC



DEMONS TO DIAMONDS

SUPERCHARGER: NEW LIFE FOR THE VCS

The biggest complaint against the VCS, even by those who love the system, is its low-resolution graphics. Enter the Arcadia Supercharger, a device that gives this popular machine exactly the shot in the arm it needs.

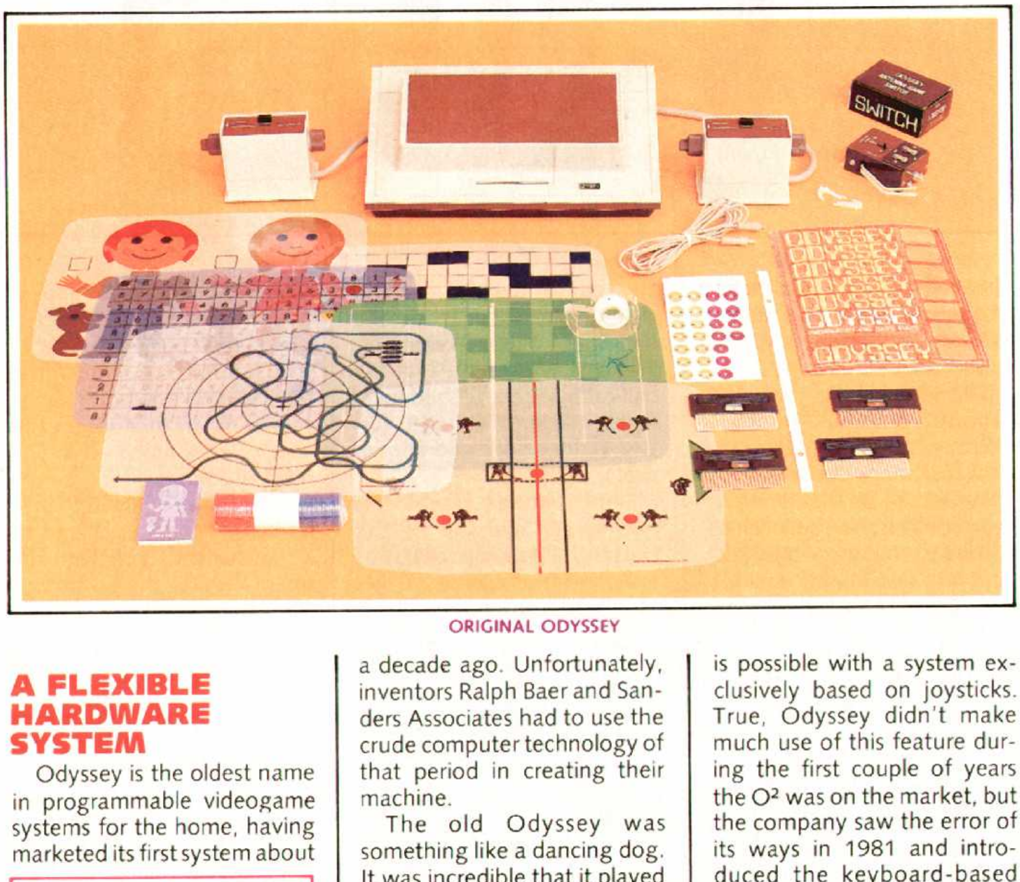
The Supercharger is something new under the VCS sun, a *RAM* cartridge. It plugs into the regular slot and then attaches to any cassette record via a cable. Games on tape can then be entered into the VCS for playing through the Supercharger cartridge.

What it does, basically, is increase the amount of screen RAM available to the VCS. That means that Supercharger games can have more objects in motion on the screen and render images with more detail than is possible in the ordinary 4K cartridge.

Those with some computer experience may blanch at the thought of connecting their VCS to a tape-based system. Fortunately, the Supercharger enters data so rapidly that loading takes only a few seconds, rather than the 10 minutes or so that is required to load some taped Apple II games.

The Supercharger is list priced at approximately $80 and comes with a **Phaser Patrol** cassette. Future releases

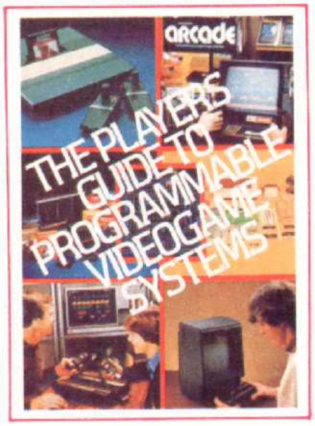
ODYSSEY^2: The



ORIGINAL ODYSSEY

A FLEXIBLE HARDWARE SYSTEM

Odyssey is the oldest name in programmable videogame systems for the home, having marketed its first system about a decade ago. Unfortunately, inventors Ralph Baer and Sanders Associates had to use the crude computer technology of that period in creating their machine.



The old Odyssey was something like a dancing dog. It was incredible that it played such a variety of games, even if the games themselves didn't do much to fire the imagination.

Let's just say this early experience didn't go for nothing. It consistently shows up in the company's current videogame machine, the Odyssey^2.

This standard programmable videogame's main advantage is its full membrane-type keyboard. It allows the possibility for a much wider variety of input from the players than is possible with a system exclusively based on joysticks. True, Odyssey didn't make much use of this feature during the first couple of years the O^2 was on the market, but the company saw the error of its ways in 1981 and introduced the keyboard-based Master Strategy Series.

Except for the keyboard, the Odyssey^2 console is simplicity itself. The flat silver-finished unit has a large red on/off button, a cartridge slot and a pair of joysticks wired into the machine. (Handy gamers can detach a defective controller by opening the machine.)

The action button on the joystick mixes good news with bad. They're large and comfy, but do exhibit a tendency to break down when the gaming action reaches critical mass.

Wiring the controllers into the console does eliminate the problem of plug breakage, but it also creates a serious limitation. The joystick must be used for all cartridges, even those which, like **Blockout/Breakdown**, would be more fun to play with a paddle.

ARCADE-STYLE SOFTWARE

The Odyssey^2 is known as the family system because its software library, though not nearly as large as some other systems' catalogs, is unusually diverse. Whether you prefer shoot-outs or sports, battle games or board games, there's likely to be something available you'll enjoy.

Now, the flip side to this particular coin is that there aren't too many cartridges in any one category. If all you want is sports and then some more sports, you may well want to seek elsewhere. On the other hand, those who have wide-ranging interests may find the Odyssey^2 most attractive.

Some good bets among O^2 cartridges include:

UFO (*Odyssey*). This is not only the best game in the whole Odyssey catalog of software, it's one of the most compelling action games produced for any home system. You're the commander of a highly mobile saucer charged with ridding your sector of space from hunter-killer satellites and enemy faster-than-such as **Communist Mutants from Outer Space** will cost about $15 each.

CUSTOM CONTROLLERS

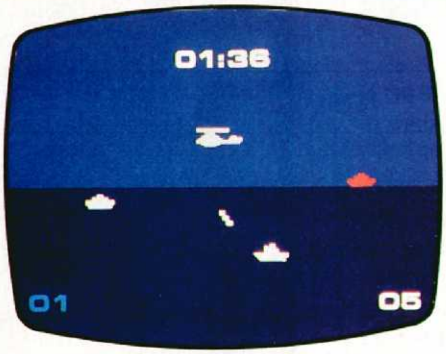
With the standard Atari 2600 joystick becoming the most commonly-used controller in the videogame universe, it has become the basis for an array of adaptations and additions culminating in a virtual industry. Joystick stands, console type controllers and deluxe joysticks are sprouting like mushrooms.

Currently leading the parade of companies with super controllers is the Chicago's WICO, already a producer of coin-op controls. Their new joystick is a heavily based controller with both side and top-mounted action buttons. WICO also looks to be the first company to get a trac-ball controller onto the market. The tracball is fluid and highly responsive and more controllers for alternate systems are on the way.

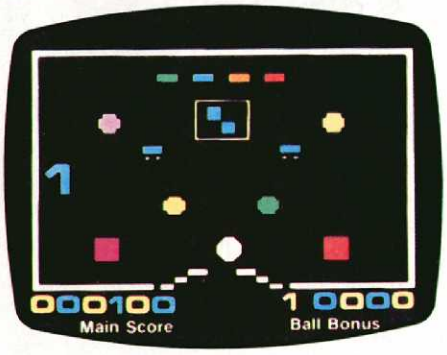
Discwasher, meanwhile, has a beautifully hand-molded stick with a top-mounted action/fire button and Computability has two joystick models, the Starfighter and the lower-priced Slik Stik, both available for under $20 each.

Fans of button/console controllers can look at either the Starplex or B.C. Controllers, each retailing at $29.95.

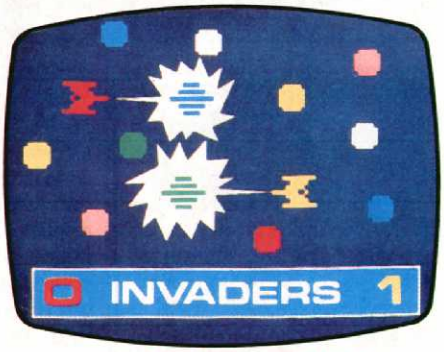
Family System



SUBCHASE



THUNDERBALL



INVADERS FROM HYPERSPACE

light patrol craft. The cartridge is especially good for those who don't like long, multi-round games; you'll be lucky to stay with this one for more than five minutes before your saucer turns into space debris.

Baseball (*Odyssey*). This is a surprisingly detailed electronic version of the national pastime for two players. Pitching, hitting and fielding all play a part, and the various aspects of the game are woven together quite effectively.

Blockout/Breakdown (*Odyssey*^{2}). Despite having to be controlled with a joystick instead of a paddle, this is a pretty good wall-bashing (and building) game for one or two players. A nice touch is that the computer is willing to handle either side in solitaire games.

War of Nerves (*Odyssey*). The unique control system which lets the gamer move an entire army of robots at the same time, is the prime ingredient in creating one of the best video war games ever to be published. Two laser-equipped armies square off against each other and fight on fields with lots of terrain features.

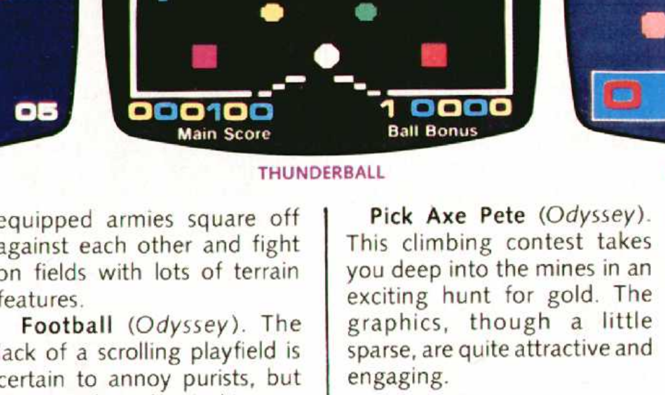
Football (*Odyssey*). The lack of a scrolling playfield is certain to annoy purists, but this arcade-style pigskin cartridge will surely entertain those who are less than fanatical football buffs. The offense can run and pass, while the defense has the job of rushing the passer and shadowing deep receivers.

Pick Axe Pete (*Odyssey*). This climbing contest takes you deep into the mines in an exciting hunt for gold. The graphics, though a little sparse, are quite attractive and engaging.

THE MASTER STRATEGY SERIES

Memory limitation has proven to be one of the worst problems facing any designer of videogame software. The folks at Odyssey came up with a novel way of getting around this roadblock: They created a series of games which transfer some of the burden for record-keeping and so forth to the human participants, leaving the O^2 to take care of the action elements.

ODYSSEY^2 AND SOUND MODULE



The sumptuously packaged Master Strategy Series of videogame/boardgame hybrids provides gamers with an opportunity to enjoy an unusually rich gaming experience. The individual titles may well be beyond the youngest Odyssey fans, but more mature ones may well find that these contests are their favorites.

Currently available are:

Quest for the Rings. This is a fantasy adventure for two participants acting as a team. Each character has a special power, such as the ability to turn invisible or throw magic spells, to aid him in capturing the 10 magic rings.

Conquest of the World. Global power politics are the subject of this military-tinged simulation. Skillful planning, good timing and an occasional show of force can make your home country into a world-class power.

The Great Wall Street Fortune Hunt. Whether you're an actual investor or just someone attracted by the glamor and money of the stock exchange, this money game will provide a stern test of your financial instincts. One or more would-be Rockefellers can buy, sell and trade an array of securities.

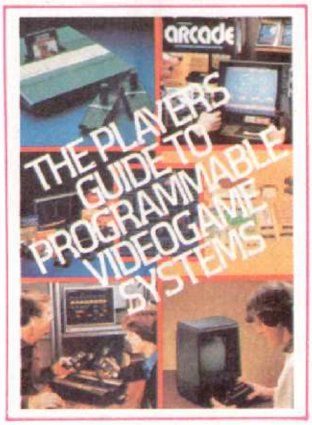
A prime feature is a display that includes a scrolling stock ticker and newswire.

THE ODYSSEY^2 SPEAKS

Sometime during the first half of 1983, an extra dimension will soon be added to the Odyssey^2 videogame

MATTEL:

SUPER GRAPHICS GALORE



MATTEL'S MODULAR HARDWARE.

Mattel announced the Intellivision, amid a flood of publicity in 1981, as the harbinger of the world of home computers to come. It was projected as a modular system that would begin with the videogame-oriented Master Component and then, through the addition of various modules, be expandable into a full-fledged computer.

The catalog was bright with promise, but this ambitious plan somehow never got untracked. Only the Master Component has entered into national distribution. The keyboard has been mired in test market for a couple of years, and only an optimist would expect to see it soon.

Does that make the Intellivision a failure? Not to the more than two million videogamers who own Master Components. They're too busy having fun with the system's rapidly expanding software collection to worry much about a computer that probably would've been something less than state-of-the-art by the time it all came to market, anyway.

The Intellivision as it stands is a senior programmable videogame system. It has high-resolution graphics, roughly 8K of resident memory and significantly more screen RAM (used to move objects around the playfield). In plain English, this means that the images in an Intellivision game look better than those in a standard system cartridge, and more items can be in motion simultaneously than is possible with hardware possessing less screen RAM.

RESET
OFF-ON
SPACE SPARTANS
INTELLIVOICE VOICE SYNTHESIS MODULE

INTELLIVOICE

INTELLIVISION

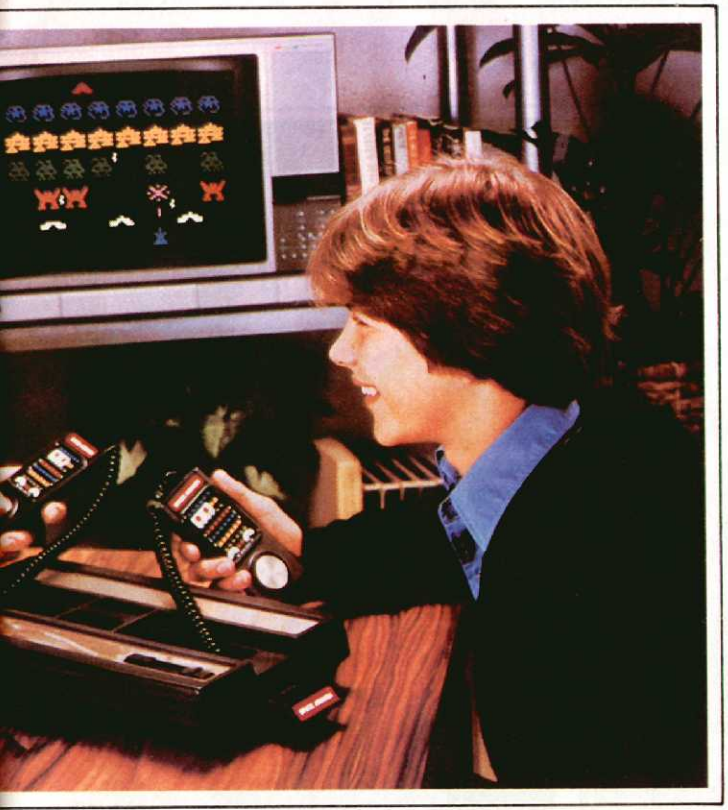
So far, so good. The hitch is that movement speed is somewhat slower in Intellivision games than it is in games that mate with other systems. This is barely noticeable in most of the sports simulations, but it is very much a factor in action-oriented contests.

The design of the Intellivision controller magnifies this problem. The command devices, hard-wired into the system on coil cords, each have a monoplanar (flat) keypad, a pair of action buttons mounted on each edge and the controversial direction disc. Though the disc certainly has its supporters, many arcaders find it frustrating to use the disc to steer in games which require rapid changes in direction.

One feature of the Master Component that may come in handy is that cartridges are plugged in on the right side rather than loading from the top. Since the controllers fit into niches that allow them to system—a speech synthesizer. Usable with a special line of voice cartridges, this device plugs into the console's slot and, in turn, accepts the usual ROM cart.

Instead of just a few beeps and boops, the O² voice games will feature actual speech. Although a unit was not available for exhaustive testing for this players guide, a special demonstration of the unit's capabilities was very impressive. The speech is sharp, clear and easily understandable, which should also greatly enhance play.

The first of the cartridges to utilize the voice synthesizer is **K.C.'s Crazy Chase.** The game plays without the Voice unit, but obviously, is even better with it.



lie flush with the top of the console, the Intellivision can be stored on a much skinnier shelf than some of the other machines—and it doesn't need appreciably more "head room" when it's actually in operation.

SUPERB SPORTS SIMULATIONS

With the exception of professional wrestling, just about every team or individual sport worth mentioning has found its way into the Intellivision cartridge lineup. No videogaming system—or home computer, for that matter—at any price offers sports cartridges in such quality and quantity.

Some (of the many) superior cartridges include:

Major League Baseball. Two managers can match wits in the most comprehensive baseball action game ever created. Pitching and batting are satisfyingly detailed, and no electronic version of the national pastime has a more fully realized fielding component. Keypad input allows for individual control of every fielder on all plays.

NFL Football. The only possible rap against this one is that it is such a realistic simulation of gridiron thrills that it may be too complex for those who aren't fairly knowledgeable about the real-life sport. The selection of available formations and plays is awesome.

USAC Auto Racing. This is a rarity among the sports games in that it can be played solitaire as well as head-to-head. Multiple courses of varying difficulty as well as a choice of cars makes it easy to pick a variation that's appropriate to the player's skill level.

NASL Soccer. Although there are only three men from each team on the screen at a time, the scrolling playfield permits realistic play-making and passing since you can boot the ball to off-screen teammates.

NBA Basketball. This is easily the best hoop cartridge available today. Clever use of the overlays makes it simple to work the ball around the court and set up a high-percentage shot.

INJOY-A-STICK

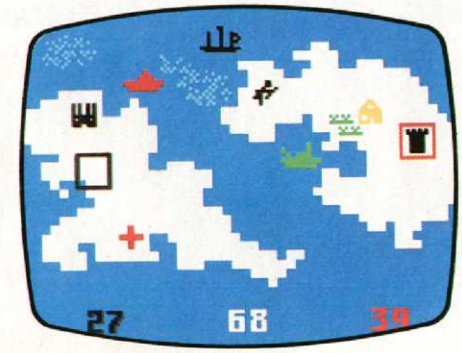
NON-SPORTS SOFTWARE

It would be a gross oversimplification to say that the only good Intellivision cartridges are the sports games. While the systems' software designers haven't fared quite as well with action games, there are a few well worth considering. A recent development which has improved the situation is that cartridges from independent publishers are now reaching stores for the first time, expanding the selection of titles.

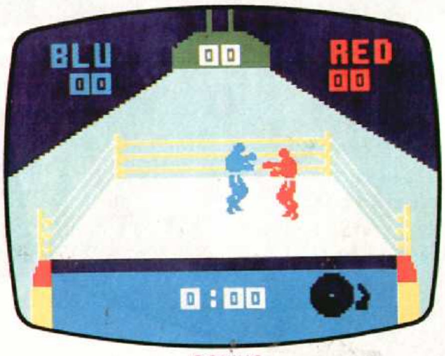
Some of the most exciting titles (manufacturers' names in parentheses) are:

Space Battle (*Mattel*). This interstellar combat game combines tactics and strategy by offering two distinct playfields. In this solitaire game, the commander dispatches three squadrons to deal with enemy fleets streaking toward his mother ship. When the rival forces meet in space, switching to the battle display allows the player to take command of a space fighter and deal with the menace personally.

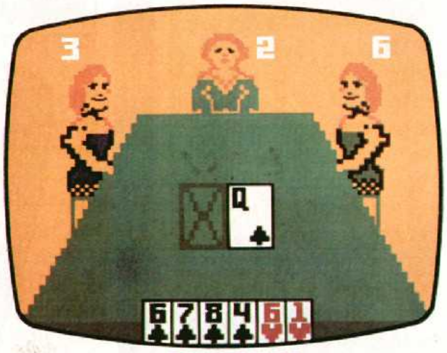
Night Stalker (*Mattel*). This is an intriguing maze-shootout that is only slightly marred by an inappropriate control scheme. You must use all your



UTOPIA



BOXING



ROYAL DEALER

wits to avoid the increasingly deadly robot attackers.

Demon Attack (*Imagic*). In many ways this can be considered a deluxe edition of the game that won the hearts of VCS players across the country. Slick graphics highlight this fast-moving invasion-style game.

Armor Battle (*Mattel*). Forget all previous tank combat games, this is the one. Each team has two armored vehicles and can switch back and forth between them at will. The terrain, seen in overhead perspective, is both varied and detailed.

WORDS TO PLAY BY

Voice modules are turning up all over, but Intellivision has the distinct advantage of being the first out of the gate. Their Intellivoice module plugs directly into the cartridge slot of the Master Component and special, non-compatible voice videogames are, in turn, slipped into the voice module.

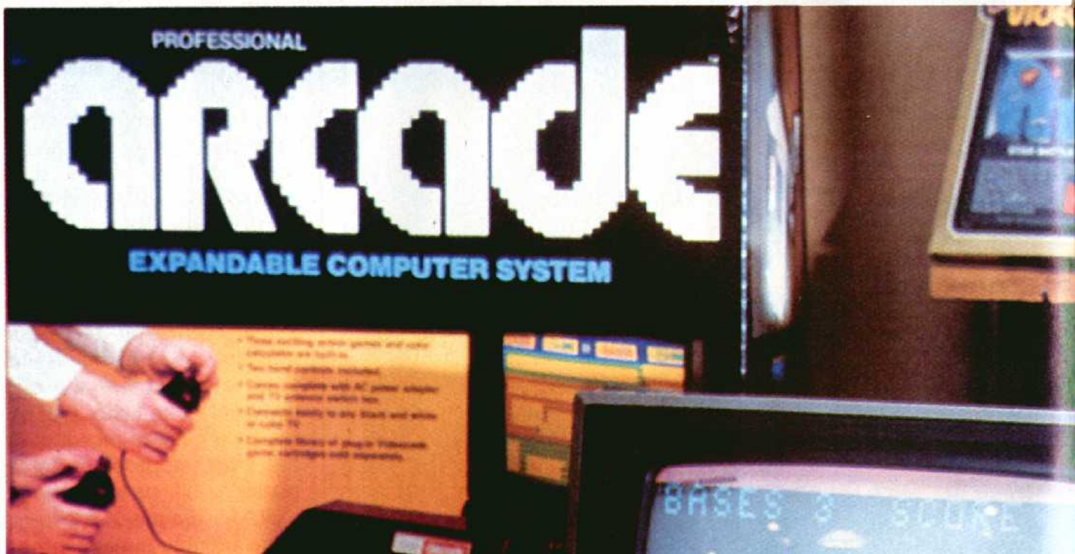
The earliest releases for this new line include **Space Spartans**, a jazzed-up, revamped version of the early classic **Space Battle**, complete with words to live by from command center—male and female voices alternating, but randomly—giving constant updates on bases and onboard equipment, and **B-17 Bomber.**

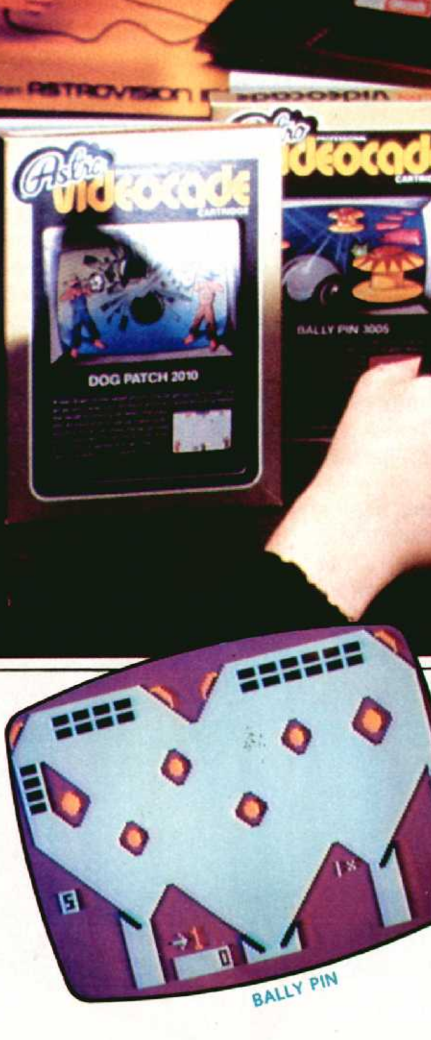
COPING WITH INTELLIVISION CONTROLLERS

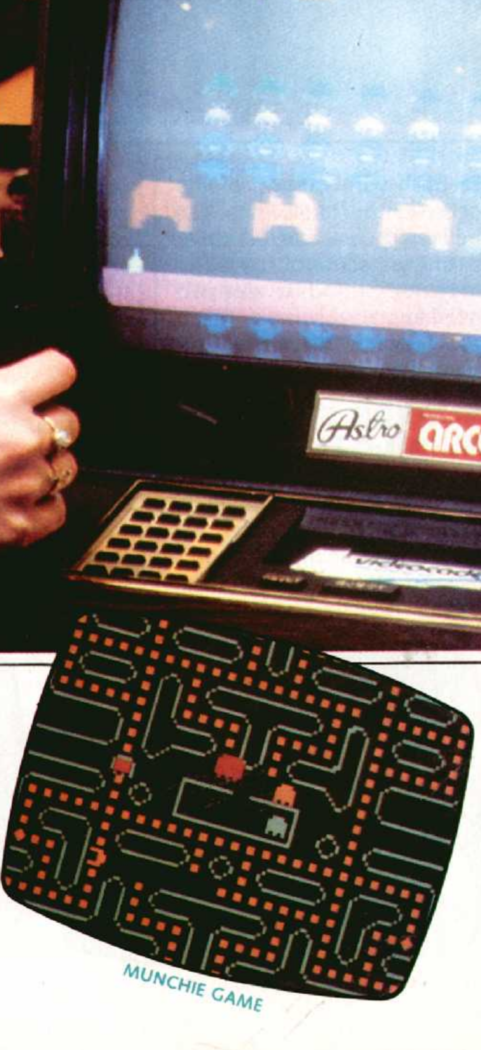
While hailed as a great innovation at the time of their introduction, the Intellivision hybrid keypad/disc controller has proven something of a lemon in gaming circles. Especially when engaged in fast action, arcade-type contests, the disc proves both clumsy *and* painful to manipulate.

In answer to the growing need for a joystick-type adaptor, several bright-eyed inventors have developed ways around the problem. Video Product Sales, for example, has the Injoy-A-Stick, essentially a replacement disc for the controller with a joystick-like shaft attached. Fans of knob-type joysticks, however, might prefer the Skil-Stik from C & T Creations of Providence, RI.

ASTRO




BALLY PIN


MUNCHIE GAME

CADE: The Big Comeback

COSMIC RAIDERS

THE STRANGE HISTORY OF ASTROCADE

Before there was a VCS or an Odyssey², the Bally Manufacturing Company introduced a machine under the name, Bally Professional Arcade. The company billed it as a videogame machine with computer-like features that could be upgraded to a full-scale microcomputer through the addition of planned modules such as a keyboard.

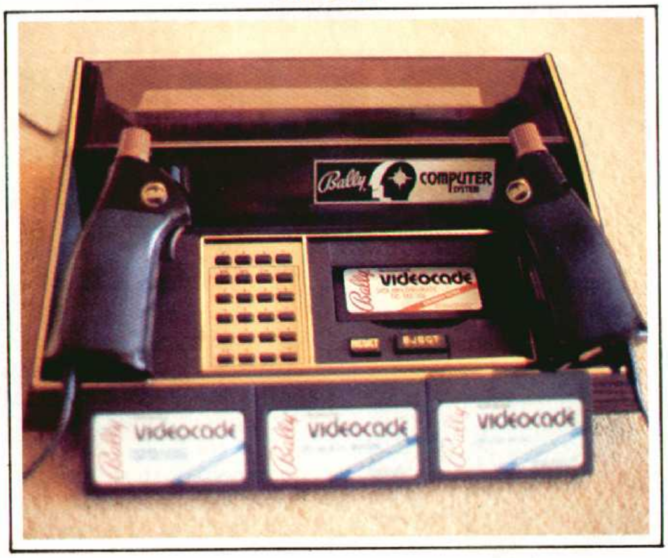
This was a fine-sounding plan that never came off. A combination of problems, including a stiff retail price and Bally's lack of experience in marketing consumer products, caused the company to pull in its horns in favor of concentrating on the coin-op business it knows so well.

Yet the system refused to die. User groups filled the void by producing both hardware and software for the machine. It was fairly simple to use the Bally BASIC cartridge to program videogames for the machine, and this resulted in something over 200 games on cassette tape for the system. A couple of suppliers have even brought out keyboards!

The system continued its underground existence until 1981, when a new company called Astrovision acquired the exclusive license to make and market the machine and its software. One quick name change later, and Astrocade, Inc., had the revived Astrocade back in the stores. The company is creating new games, has produced a revised version of the BASIC cartridge and is even getting a ZGrass keyboard ready for introduction in the near future.

THE HARDWARE SYSTEM

ASTROCADE



The main features of the unit's front panel are a cartridge slot, reject button and a calculator-style keypad. The 24 keys can be used to produce full alpha-numerics for home programming, though it's quite arduous to input programs using this keypad.

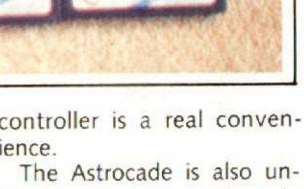
Many consider the Astrocade controllers to be the best available as standard issue. The gun-grip command device has a paddle, joystick and a trigger, permitting some complicated player-game interaction. The ability to combine the rotational movement of the paddle with the directional movement of the joystick turns games that would be glorified *Pongs* on other systems into genuine electronic simulations found here.

A real plus is that the controllers can be used to select the game, number of players and other variables without need to approach the console. This comes in especially handy if you do your gaming on a giant-screen television set. Too bad there's no remote reset key or any way to insert a cartridge from across a room. Still being able to handle most of the preliminaries using the controller is a real convenience.

The Astrocade is also unique among current systems in that it provides the bonus of three resident games and a built-in calculator. **Gunfight** is a nifty wild west showdown, **Checkmate** is a line-building contest for up to four players, and **Scribing** is one of the best video drawing programs found this side of the high-end microcomputers.

ACCESSORIES ADD DIMENSION

As mentioned, those who would like to upgrade their videogame to the status of an



actual personal computer down the road, could do worse than investigate the Astrocade. It is the best bet for such conversion among the four established systems.

Not only is the ZGrass keyboard likely to open computer graphics vistas for would-be programmers, but the Astro BASIC cartridge gives owners a chance to see how they do as amateur game inventors.

ASTROCADE SOFTWARE

Despite its relatively long life in the market, the Astrocade still suffers from a scarcity of games on ROM cartridges. The best Astrocade programs—**Clowns, Red Baron, Football, Galactic Invasion, Space Fortress,** and **The Incredible Wizard**—are strictly first class. Some of the rest of the titles in the catalog—**Dogpatch** comes to mind immediately—look like a misguided attempt to beef-up the number of titles in the software catalog at the expense of quality.

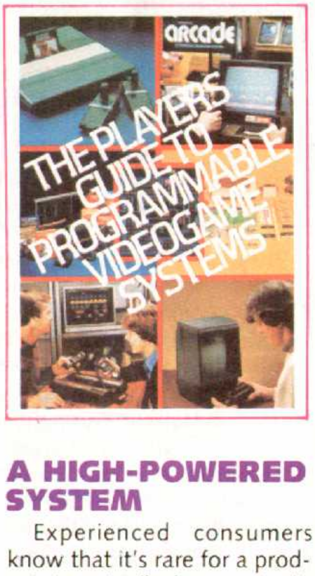
The user-produced games do improve the situation somewhat. The catch is that they're only available through the mail at this writing. Astrocade has shown some interest in working more closely with its legion of fans, so they may change in 1983. (Meanwhile, check the January issue of **Electronic Games** for a fuller description of games on cassette.)

Some of the best Astrocade ROM cartridge games are:

The Incredible Wizard. Designed by the same man, Bob Ogdon, who worked on the Midway **Wizard of Wor** coin-op, this home version may actually be a slight improvement over the original.

COLECOVISION:

RIDING THE THIRD WAVE



A HIGH-POWERED SYSTEM

Experienced consumers know that it's rare for a product to actually live up to its advance press clippings. After all, claims are a dime a dozen as long as no one is in a position to test their truthfulness.

So if electronic gamers took a skeptical attitude about ColecoVision during much of 1982, it was only common sense. Now that this third wave system has reached the consuming public, the prevailing verdict is that ColecoVision may well be even *better* than promised.

The system's console features the bare minimum of controls, since game selection and re-start are handled with the controllers. There's an on/off slide switch and a re-set button on the top panel, an interface on the front which will accept forthcoming ColecoVision modules and two niches for the controllers on the top toward the left-rear.

The controllers feature a doorknob joystick, a monoplaner keypad and a pair of action buttons. The command device is perhaps just a little large for the small-handed to grip comfortably, but should present no serious problem. The joystick is only fair-to-middling, however, and home arcade aces will no doubt look forward to being able to buy some sort of gourmet joystick to enhance play.

SOFTWARE BRINGS COIN-OPS HOME

The capabilities of the ColecoVision, particularly its 6K-plus bytes of screen-RAM, result in games that look and play better than anything seen on a home system so far. The colors are deep and rich, the images are intricately detailed, and the play-action is most satisfying.

Coleco itself plans to specialize primarily in home editions of games that should be familiar to those who frequent the family fun centers, along with a few adventure and sports titles. It'll be up to third-party software publishers to produce original contests in order to fill out the ColecoVision-compatible catalog. If early sales momentum for the system holds up, it won't be long before other companies hop on the bandwagon, either.

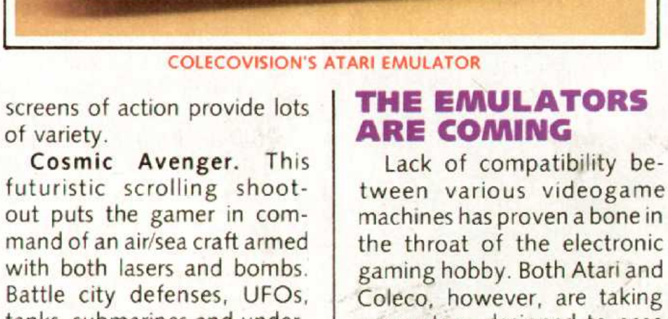
Meanwhile, ColecoVision owners can revel in such electronic treats as:

Donkey Kong. Your girlfriend is the prisoner of a giant ape who has spirited her to the top of a half-completed skyscraper. It's up to you as Mario the heroic maintenance man to scale the ladders and complete the rescue. Three screens of action provide lots of variety.

Cosmic Avenger. This futuristic scrolling shoot-out puts the gamer in command of an air/sea craft armed with both lasers and bombs. Battle city defenses, UFOs, tanks, submarines and undersea guns can be found in this fast-paced war game.

Smurfs. This adventure game features graphics which can only be compared with Saturday morning cartoon shows. The object is to leap over the obstacles on the road to Gargamel's castle, where the Smurf hero must save the Smurf-ette.

Venture. This home edition may, at last, bring this game the acclaim it has deserved since Exidy introduced it in the commercial arcades. Explore the various rooms, outwit the monsters and snag the prizes. Sound and graphics are straight from the original quarter-copper.



COLECOVISION'S ATARI EMULATOR

THE EMULATORS ARE COMING

Lack of compatibility between various videogame machines has proven a bone in the throat of the electronic gaming hobby. Both Atari and Coleco, however, are taking some steps designed to ease the situation.

Emulators that attach to the ColecoVision and Atari 5200 will soon make it possible for owners of the systems to play cartridges originally designed

One or two players try to keep the mazes free of monsters, some of whom turn invisible and must be tracked on the small radar screen located at the bottom of the display.

Space Fortress. The arcader controls the armament of a large space station located smack in the center of the playfield. Aliens approach from the four cardinal directions, firing as they come. The captain of the station must destroy everything in sight before the fortress suffers a deadly collision and blows up with a screen-filling explosion.

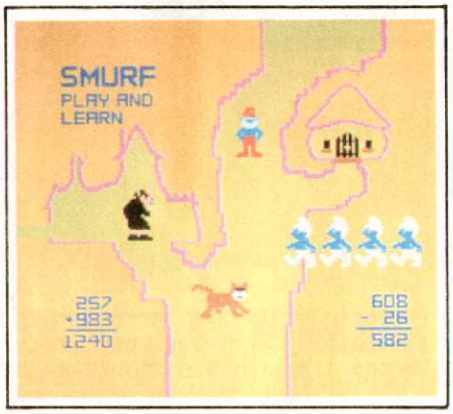
Galactic Invasion. This home version of Midway's **Galaxian** coin-op features nine different levels of skill, and the action can become pretty intense at upper difficulty settings. Your job: wipe out the swooping aliens before they blast your ship to atoms.

Clowns/Brickyard. Talk about "best buys" ! This cartridge includes a pair of programs that could easily have been sold separately. One's a wall-bashing contest, while the other involves bouncing a pair of clowns on a teeter-totter so that they sail up to the top portion of the playfield and break the balloons floating there.

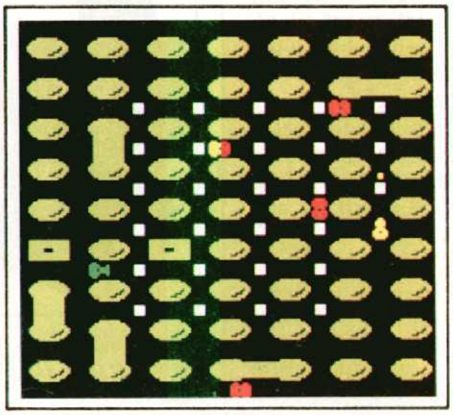
Football. This sports simulation offers enough scope to satisfy serious football thinkers, but the control scheme is so beautifully constructed that it is pretty simple to learn even for those who don't live and die by what happens on the nation's gridirons.

Red Baron. Fight in the skies with this air-war game. Nice rendering of the planes makes it a pleasure to look at as well as to play.

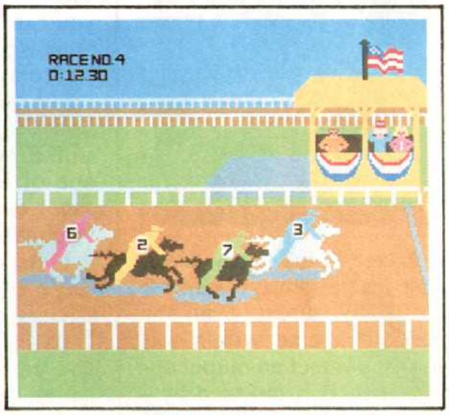
Several new games will be made available soon.



SMURF PLAY AND LEARN



SPECTAR



HORSE RACING

for the VCS. It won't improve the games any, of course, but this will make it possible for all owners of the Video Computer System to upgrade their home arcade equipment without sacrificing the investment they've already made in cartridges for their present machine.

As with all hobbyists, there is a natural inclination to want to "trade up"—buy a superior system that will remain compatible with their current videogames.

ATARI'S 5200: A SUPER SYSTEM

INSIDE THE CONSOLE

Beneath the sleek exterior of the Atari 5200 lurks the throbbing power of a 64K computer designed specifically to play high-quality games. This third wave programmable gaming system has the screen-RAM needed to get the job done, too, and the initial group of cartridge releases looks at least as good as the carts for the company's 400 and 800 computer systems with some improvement.

Game functions such as pause and reset are handled with the controllers, so the console sports a clean and uncluttered look that is most attractive. It physically resembles the housing originally scheduled for use on the remote control VCS, though the overall effect is even better.

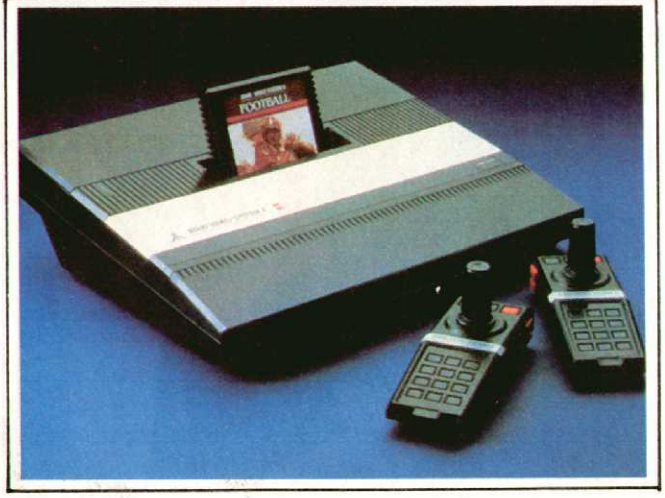
The controllers for the new system are a gallant attempt at crossbreeding the trakball and conventional joystick. The harder the stick is pushed in any given direction, the faster the on-screen moving object zips across the playfield. Atari must be congratulated for its attempt, but the examples tested by **EG** demonstrate that there are still some bugs needing to be ironed out. (Atari intends to have a true Trakball controller available soon.)

ATARI 5200 SOFTWARE

How exciting the 5200 software list looks will largely depend on the viewer's vantage point. Those who already own an Atari 400 or 800 computer—or possibly even a VCS—will not be quite as enthusiastic about the selection as someone who has owned either a different brand of fun machine or is about to make a first videogame purchase.

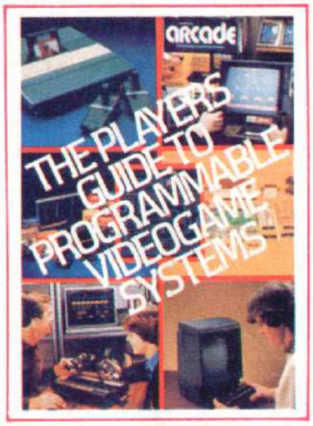
Like any new system, there isn't a lot of variety yet. Most of the cartridges are tried-and-true Atari Classics like **Missile Command** and **Space Invaders**, altered slightly from their computer versions. The line also includes football and baseball games as well as Atari's official home edition of **Galaxian**.

ATARI 5200



VECTREX:

The Programmable Stand-Alone



Access to the family television set has always been essential to gamers. Even the best videogame system was useless without an output device such as is provided by a TV picture tube.

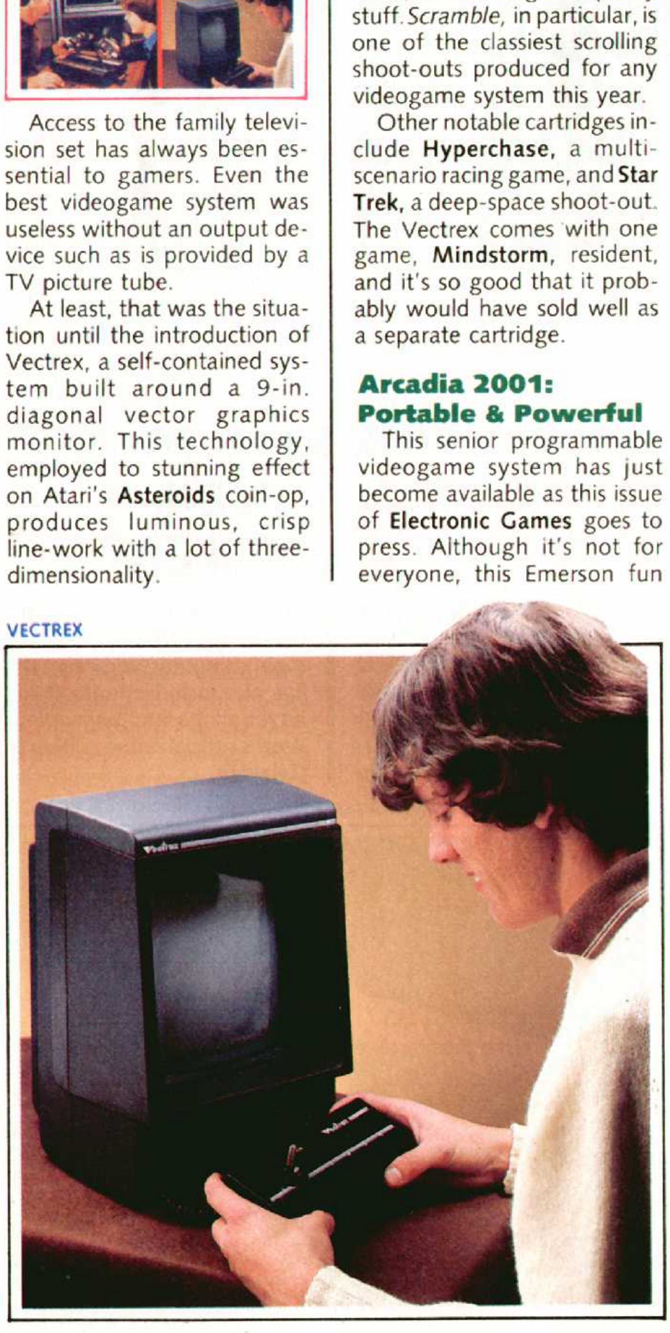
At least, that was the situation until the introduction of Vectrex, a self-contained system built around a 9-in. diagonal vector graphics monitor. This technology, employed to stunning effect on Atari's **Asteroids** coin-op, produces luminous, crisp line-work with a lot of three-dimensionality.

The Vectrex's monitor is black and white, but this isn't quite as big a drawback as you'd think. Easing things a bit is the clever use of color overlays. With some cartridges, such as **Scramble** or **Rip-Off**, you can almost forget everything is black and white in the heat of action.

The cartridge line is still very small, but it's all good-quality stuff. *Scramble*, in particular, is one of the classiest scrolling shoot-outs produced for any videogame system this year.

Other notable cartridges include **Hyperchase**, a multi-scenario racing game, and **Star Trek**, a deep-space shoot-out. The Vectrex comes with one game, **Mindstorm**, resident, and it's so good that it probably would have sold well as a separate cartridge.

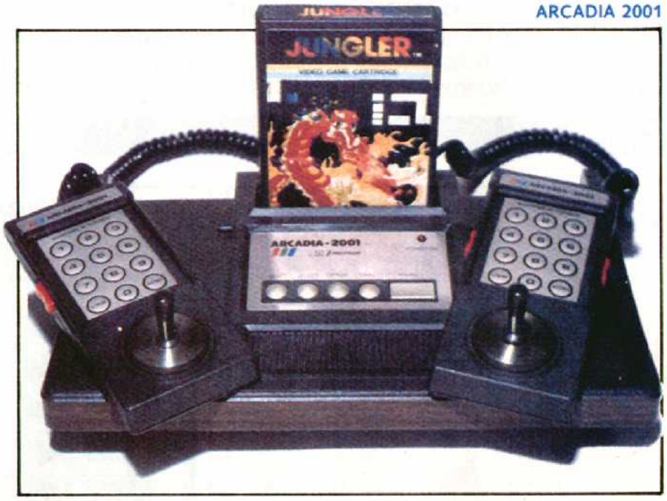
VECTREX



Arcadia 2001: Portable & Powerful

This senior programmable videogame system has just become available as this issue of **Electronic Games** goes to press. Although it's not for everyone, this Emerson fun machine appears to have a definite role to play in the hobby.

ARCADIA 2001



Since it operates on direct as well as alternating current, the Arcadia 2001 makes a perfect portable. Its small size won't take up much baggage space, so it can come along on vacations and trips.

Another amazing thing about the Arcadia 2001 is the price. It's selling for $99 in discount outlets, the lowest-ever price for a senior system.

In truth, the Arcadia 2001 does have some drawbacks. The controllers aren't very responsive and the game graphics, though good as far as they go, are a little sparse. There's a library of a couple of dozen cartridges to keep gamers entertained.

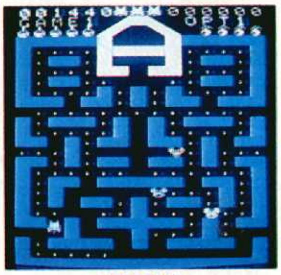
WHAT'S NEXT FOR VIDEOGAMES?

The future of home programmable videogame systems holds—you guessed it!—more new systems.

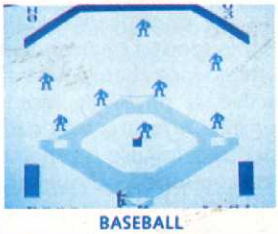
Making its debut next month will be Ultravision. This premium-priced unit is a stand-alone programmable with 64K of resident memory, high fidelity sound (including a headphone option), professional-quality 16 position joystick and its own high resolution color monitor.

On its way from Commodore is Max, slotted as the junior member of the company's line of machines which includes the VIC-20, VIC-64 and PET. Not much is known about the capabilities of the Max, but it is expected to be a senior programmable videogame system that will also provide a sampling of the joys of personal computers.

There are undoubtedly other systems waiting in the wings even beyond these. Despite the popularity of videogames, only 15% or so of all American families have them, leaving plenty of room for new entries into the field to grab a sizable audience. ⊖



CAT TRAX



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TODAY'S
MICROC

An Overview of the Four Most Popular Machines

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

Science fiction writers and futurists have been predicting the age of the computer in their stories and articles since long before what folks once called "electronic brains" had become an everyday fact of life. Although the technology has always impressed many, computers appeared to be very far from mass acceptance just a year or two ago.

That, however, was before the computer game software manufacturers began to strut their stuff. Just as "Uncle Miltie" fueled the television explosion in the early 1950's, so, too, has entertainment software powered the remarkable growth in home computer interest which began last year. More than half of all software programs for microcomputers are games, and no one seriously doubts that this state of affairs will persist for many years to come. While not denying the ability of the computer to perform many worthwhile and even necessary tasks, most computerists are more interested in the technology's ability to enthrall, to challenge, and to stretch the mind.

There's a boom coming in microcomputers. In fact, it's already here, as companies ranging from NEC and Panasonic to Spectravision and Mattel hit the retail market with full-featured small computers.

At the present time, however, four brands of computers hold the lion's share of gaming interest. Let's look at them...

The Atari 400/800/1200XL computer systems have seized a unique niche in the small computer world. There is an Atari machine at just about every price point from about $200 for a 16K Atari 400 to perhaps $799 for its 64K big brother, the all-new and handsomely-styled 1200XL.

One of the great things about the Atari units is that they are able to accept programs from three mediums. They contain one or more cartridge slots and have provisions for attaching either a digital tape player or a disk drive. Many of the game publishers are putting their titles on ROM carts in a bid for the largest possible Atari computer audience, though several outfits such as Broderbund, On-Line and Sirius are doing a good job of translating some of the most popular Apple II gameware into Atari editions.

Another positive factor is that all three Atari machines use the same type of command control devices — the same ones, in fact, which also work on the Atari 2600 videogame and the Commodore VIC-20 and Commodore 64 computers, too.

The most economical machine, the 400, differs from the other two in the line in several respects, the most important of which is that it has a monoplanar keyboard instead of the full-stroke set-ups found on the other two. The 800 is probably *the* most flexible of the three, since it utilizes plug-in ROM memory which is available in various sizes. The 1200XL stands forth as the most user-friendly computer, and even has a "help" key and diagnostic system included.

The Apple II is considerably more expensive than smaller computers now hitting the market, with a good system costing in the neighborhood of $2,000 (including a disk drive). On the other hand, the Apple II was the first computer to make major headway in the home market, with the result that there is far more software for this system than any other on the market. There's an Apple II edition of just about every computer game worth having — and they often come out before the versions

MPUTER GAMING SYSTEMS

programmed for other systems.

The only real negatives about the Apple arise from the manufacturer's traditional indifference to Apple owners who are primarily gamers, as opposed to being computer hobbyists. There is no external connection for game controllers, and only one joystick or a pair of paddles can be connected simultaneously, making it impossible to implement head-to-head play for most games. The best answer to this is to install one of the external connectors made by Sirius Software and others. This unit can be attached to the side of the Apple so that command devices can be added or subtracted without having to open the Apple's housing each and every time.

More Commodore VIC-20s were sold in 1982 than all personal computers put together in the previous year. This is a fitting testimony to the excellent value which this system offers to the prospective purchaser. The VIC-20 doesn't have quite the same graphic resolution of either the Apple II or Atari 400/800/1200, though the three machines *do* share the same microprocessor, the 6502. Like the Apple, there is only a provision for attaching one joystick, but the VIC-20 also offers the same flexibility as the Atari systems when it comes to accepting commercially-prepared programs on disks, cassettes and cartridges.

The VIC-20 features a full-stroke keyboard and has a fine dialect of the BASIC programming language resident. The software library for the VIC is still relatively small compared to the number of programs available for the Atari and Apple machines, but independent software publishers are hopping aboard the bandwagon at a furious rate. The current year should see more than 100 new games for this system.

The IBM Personal Computer, Big Blue's first step into the consumer market, is the newest of the four computers covered in the *Electronic Games Software Encyclopedia*. It is, therefore, the toughest to evaluate as a game-playing machine. The IBM PC is still finding its niche in the computer market, and it may take most of 1983 before accurate determinations concerning how much impact it's going to have on the electronic gaming world can be made.

Certainly, this is a much more costly system than the other three machines discussed here, even more expensive than the Apple II. It is difficult to figure the cost of an "average" set-up, because it's all sold piecemeal, but a good guess would be that someone who wanted the whole works would have to spend at least $2,500. This leads many to suppose that IBM buyers are apt to consider its game-playing potential only as an afterthought; the IBM PC is squarely aimed at the serious small-business user.

Of course, that has not stopped several leading publishers of entertainment software from testing the market. It seems likely, after all, that even those who mean business when they sit down at the keyboard might sometimes enjoy a little recreation. There's only a small handful of games being covered in this edition of the *Software Encyclopedia*, but trends point to a significant number of IBM PC-compatible disks appearing over the next six-to-12 months.

Are there other small computers worth the attention of the prospective buyer? You bet. At this point, however, the *Electronic Games Software Encyclopedia* only includes the four which have made the greatest impact thus far.

APPLE II

A2-PBI PINBALL

Sublogic
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Video Pinball
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

The theme of this magnificent electronic flipper game is "Night Mission", a daring raid during World War II. This is the most minute simulation of conventional pinball ever attempted, even going as far as to include a facsimile of the insertion of the coin in the slot at the beginning and the matching of a random number by the final digit for a free game at the end.

In between, it's pure pinball on a table that, if anything, is a trifle overloaded, with play-features. Designer Bruce Artwick adds an extra dimension to the game by giving computerists a chance to modify just about every basic parameter of the game, from changing the speed of the ball to adjusting the length of time a kick-out hole retains the ball before ejecting it.

A.E.

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Robots developed for pollution control are running amuck, in this invasion contest. They swirl over the horizon and zoom hither and yon across the playfield, as they try to destroy the player's active cannon (three are available in all) as it moves back and forth along the bottom boundary. The idea is to push the crazed robots back wave by wave until, on the eighth screen, you move them more than 600 billion miles from Earth.

A.E.'s shooting mechanic is unorthodox. The gamer pushes the action-button to launch a rocket, releasing it the instant at which detonation is desired.

ADVENTURE IN TIME

Phoenix Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Starting from the placid present, this text adventure takes you careening through history on the trail of a master criminal. You must hop from period to period, dealing with the traps and puzzles ready to confront you at every hand, so that you can eventually nab the fiend and avert his evil plan for the Earth.

ADVENTURE TO ATLANTIS

Synergistic
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $40.00
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Colorful, animated visuals decorate this entertaining cross between action adventures and arcade-style games. You must go from the isle of Lapour to Atlantis to retrieve the orb of power, so that the more humane civilization you represent can survive against the hostile Atlanteans. Along the way, there are puzzles to solve, monsters to battle and treasures to win.

ARCADE MACHINE

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Though this isn't really a game, it offers a fascinating experience for computerists who would like to create their own entertainment software with comparative speed and ease. The *Arcade Machine* lets any reasonably intelligent person design, without the need for programming know-how, an invasion game complete with animated graphics, sound, and most of the other features found on commercially published disks.

ASTEROID FIELD

Cavalier
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $24.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 8

Game faithfully recreates strategy and playability of arcade game. For those unfamiliar with this classic, gamer controls ship in center of screen with asteroids whizzing by in all directions. He must try to clear screen of asteroids while shooting down some alien craft that appears at irregular intervals. This version can be controlled in several ways. One is straight keyboard and several others use different paddle configurations. For the price, a near must for the gaming library.

BANDITS

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

This invasion contest features both attractive graphics and some of the most dynamic action to be found in the world of computer gaming. Your mobile gun at the bottom of the playfield is the only defense your moonbase has against the waves of alien thieves that want to make off with your choicest supplies. The twin goals are to destroy the attackers as they appear in the upper left-hand corner of the display and to stop those which do survive long enough to snatch something before they can exit. Depending on the level of difficulty then in force, the player receives a bonus which is multiplied by the number of objects in the current wave which were *not* stolen.

BOLO

Synergistic
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Probably the king of the maze combat games, if for no other reason than the magnitude of the maze. A full screen represents only one of 132 sections that size. Gamer is given five tanks to wipe out the enemy forces, who are churning out tank replacements nearly as fast as you can destroy them. There are nine skill levels and five maze densities. Only detraction is that joystick control seems to be added as an afterthought. Keyboard control works best once command keys are memorized.

BORG

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The grotesque Grud has a few surprises for those foolish enough to try to penetrate his dragon-guarded sanctum. Firing and moving with the joystick (or paddle or keyboard or whatever), the on-screen hero locomotes through a series of rooms, each designed to test the arcader's skill in a different way. If you survive the first nine chambers, which include such sticky problems as compacting walls, you may reach Grud's own chamber, where you can fight it out with the master of evil.

Of course, you'll have to move at a pretty good clip. Otherwise, Grud will summon Borg, the smiling stalker, who can float through a room, destroying all in his path.

BUG ATTACK

Cavalier
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Gamer takes the job of a beetle who, from a spot at the bottom of the screen, must defend three gardens from a collection of bugs that include ants, millipedes, medflies and so on. Scoring is done on the basis of destruction, preventing destruction and time used. Game reminiscent of *Centipede* and uses either keyboard or paddle, though the latter is preferred.

CHOPLIFTER

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

You can become a hero by pulling off a helicopter rescue in a foreign land, where our people are held in crude, abandoned army barracks. All you've got to do is take off from the friendly base, fly through enemy territory (dueling hostile aircraft), out-gun guarding tanks, land, gather up some hostages as passengers and make a safe landing back at the base.

Don't let the outstanding graphics fool you, this is one of the toughest tests of arcading skill you'll face this year. It's particularly hard to perform the rescue after the first round or so, when you must fight both tanks on the ground and the enemy planes that zoom horizontally across the upper third of the playfield.

COMPUTER AIR COMBAT

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This computer war game reproduces the thrills and excitement of World War II fights in the skies. Scenarios include 36 different airplanes from four different nations.

COMPUTER BASEBALL

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

This is the premier baseball game of the "statistical replay" type currently on the market. The game as it comes includes rosters for a number of great teams of the past, and disks available for purchase separately provide fans with the teams necessary to replay a whole recent major league season. Whether you're playing against a live manager or the computer's own "Casey", *Computer Baseball* gives the arcader a chance to make many of the decisions, such as when to warm up a reliever in the bull pen, that can confront real-life skippers.

The minimal graphic representation of each play is basically a side issue. If you enjoy trying your hand at coaching players who perform much as they did in actual games, this program is definitely for you.

CONGO

Sentient Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Steering Scroller
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

You've survived an animal attack in the jungle; now you must make your way down the river on your jerry-built raft. Along the way, you must attempt to pick up the survivors who wave at you from islands in the stream and from the bank of the mighty river, while avoiding running into obstacles ranging from native canoes to alligators.

This entertaining game has an unusually low violence quotient, though the excitement quotient is equally low during the early stages of play when there isn't really too much happening on the playfield. Once the arcader begins to make significant headway, however, the action livens up a great deal.

COSMIC BALANCE

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Fight space battles against a rival computerist, or the Apple II itself, in this space battle simulation. Like other games in SSI's *Rapidfire* series, *Cosmic Balance* is essentially a brain-stretching strategy duel in which the players' instructions are executed so rapidly that it has something of the feel of an arcade game.

Before the first shot is fired in anger, each space admiral must design the ships that will fight in the upcoming conflict. The construction process is fairly quick and clean, but don't expect to end up with an invincible vessel that can turn on a dime and pulverize a planet. The idea is to concoct a design that makes the resulting vessels optimally suitable to your favorite approach to deep space combat.

COUNTY FAIR

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Move the on-screen gun located at the bottom of the playfield back and forth as you fire off your limited supply of bullets in an effort to knock out ducks, rabbits and so forth in the shooting gallery. If one of the ducks moves too low on the screen, it takes wing and chews up some of your ammo. Rabbits left unharmed, on the other hand, multiply rapidly. Above the rows of ordinary targets is a rectangle with two small slits in it. A row of trees passes through the box heading from right to left, and all of them must be eliminated in order to keep new, additional targets from popping up.

CRANSTON MANOR

Sierra On-Line
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Old man Cranston, if one may speak ill of the electronic dead, was a strange character, indeed. He filled his mansion just outside the deserted village of Coarsegold with treasures — and a strange troop of mechanical men to protect his wealth even after his death. This illustrated adventure makes use of high-resolution graphics to allow a solo adventurer to explore the house and grounds, in an attempt to feret out its mysteries and find the gold and jewels that are reportedly hidden there.

Cranston Manor is the third in the "Hi-Res Adventure" series and is typical of this line. The pictures are fairly decent, looking like pages from a neatly done coloring book, though they do change a little more slowly than in some of the newer adventure games.

CRIMESTOPPER

Hayden Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

You're Al Clubs, grandson of another investigator of another suit, and you have until midnight of the last day of the year to find a mission heiress. This is a text adventure with the occasional enhancement that's a fairly typical example of the breed, though the setting is certainly far from ordinary.

CRISIS MOUNTAIN

Synergistic
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 10

One of the few maze games with enough forethought to really haze a scenario and a purpose. Terrorists have planted live bombs inside a mountain and you must race to get them diffused before they explode. Instead of the typical line drawing maze, the inside of the mountain really looks like a collection of caves and caverns. Some of the strategy is tricky and there won't be any easy winners this time around.

CRUSH, CRUMBLE AND CHOMP!

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This role-playing program gives computerists a chance to have the bizarre experience of assuming the identity of one of six famous monsters right out of the city-wrecking "creature features" of the 1950's and 1960's. (If traditional terrors like Godzilla and Kong aren't enough, you can even custom-design your very own monster by following the rule book's instructions.

The player can select one of four world capitals as the site of the battle between the monster and mankind. There's also the opportunity to set one of five different goals for your creature, with the choice strongly affecting how points are earned.

Just as in the movies, the monster always loses in the end, but *Crush* makes getting to that point rousing fun.

CYBORG

Sentient Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair (see text)
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Michael Berlyn applies the discipline of the science fiction writer to the adventure game format with excellent results in this futuristic adventure. A text adventure with a brief arcade-action sequence embedded in the plot, *Cyborg* basically focuses on a half-man/half-machine hero who must rediscover his own identity and avert an otherwise certain catastrophe.

The plot is very ingenious and intricate, and the interior logical consistency is impressive. *Cyborg* won't be solved in a day, but clear thinking will help experienced adventurers win through to the exciting climax.

CYCLOTRON

Sensible
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Armed with a lazer, repair pods and a limited supply of destructors, the gamer must protect the cyber crystals of the Cyclotron, the device which protects life in this galaxy. The evil Mangan will do nearly anything to destroy the crystals, thus killing off the planet's life. A unique cross-breeding of paddle and keyboard input makes the game system quite a challenge.

CYTRON MASTERS

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Battles between airborne forces composed of small armed platforms are the main event in this fast-playing program that straddles the line between arcade action contests and outright military strategy contests.

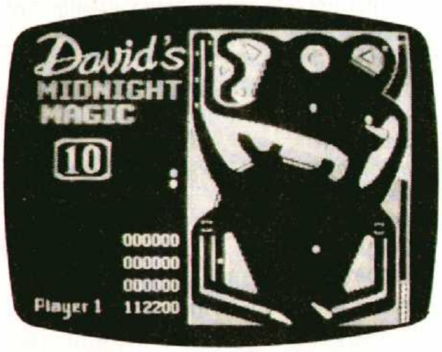
Each force consists of three types of units; shooters, mines and guided missiles for offense, and two others, bunker cytrons and anti-missile rockets, for defense.

You must destroy your opponent's cytrons and disable the rival army's energy centers (where new cytrons are produced) and, ultimately, wipe out your foe's command center.

DAVID'S MIDNIGHT MAGIC

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Video Pinball
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10



There are certainly some fancier video pinball programs, but none which features a more interesting table than this David Snyder creation. The bi-level playfield sports such favorite flipper game features as rollovers, multi-ball play, thumper bumpers, bonus multipliers, extra flippers, drop targets and much more.

This is definitely a high-skill pinball table. The machine very rarely "plays itself", with the player hanging on for the ride like a fifth wheel.

DEATH RACE '82

Avant-Garde Creations
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Gamer is trying to escape through 10 mazes while either avoiding or shooting down the Death Squad cars. Steering the car is done most unusually through the two paddle buttons. One turns car clockwise, one counterclockwise. That means firing must be done through keyboard, a bothersome chore. Game has some special draw that keeps the gamer coming back, trying to master the steering and get out of the maze.

DRAGON'S EYE

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The Seven Provinces, united in peace by the Good Magician, now tremble in fear of the Evil Necromancer, who can control the fabric of time itself with the dragon's eye. This overland adventure sends the on-screen hero on a journey across this fantasy land to find the powerful artifact and convey it to Fel City within 21 days.

The player moves through the world on a strategic map of the seven provinces, though the action switches to a tactical display when the swords come out of their scabbards. Movement and battle commands are input by the computerist using a set of single-keystroke commands, which are nicely summarized on a cardboard prompt aid supplied with the instruction booklet.

EMPIRE OF THE OVER-MIND

Avalon Hill
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $35.00
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

This text adventure will test your ability to think logically and reason your way through some moderately complex situations. The twin planetary system in which you live is under the tyrannical rule of the Over-Mind, a being of uncertain origins and, seemingly, immense power. As you explore the red and blue planets, you will fight monsters, gain treasures and generally work your way toward the final confrontation with the mad ruler itself.

A big plus is that there is more than one way to do things right in *Empire of the Over-Mind*. Some treasures are valuable for one strategy, yet may be only excess baggage if you're taking another tack.

EPOCH

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: First Person Steering and Shooting
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Your mission is simple: go forth with your spaceship and blast anything hostile into the "chorp" dimension. You control the ship with the paddles or joystick (the latter is greatly preferred) and fire at an array of enemy ships that come out of the trackless void to assault you. Since this missing won't be accomplished instantly, you can get a new supply of fuel and ammo by flying through the portal of a friendly starbase, and also actually travel backward in time by zooming through the gates scattered throughout the playing area.

FALCONS

Piccadilly Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Faithful recreation of arcade game *Phoenix*, but with a few twists. Gamer sits, only horizontally mobile, at the bottom of the screen shooting at wave after wave of invaders. If successful against enough waves, the mother ship appears and another battle ensues. Gamer is armed with missiles and protective shields. Played with paddles, keyboard or joystick, but paddles work best.

FEDERATION

Avant-Garde Creations
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Average
Overall Rating: 6

Enemy fires so quickly upon appearing on the screen that shooting it down is nearly impossible. Game would probably be better if controlled by joystick instead of keyboard. Points awarded for shooting aliens down from the sky or bombing cities below. Keyboard play is cumbersome.

FIVE GREAT GAMES

Avant-Garde
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

It would be hard to find a better value than five playable games on one disk for such a low price. Included are *Animal Bingo*, a game of logic and strategy; *Jungle Safari*, an African arcade nightmare; *Space Defense*, a standard shoot-out; *Sky Watch*, an eyesight and perception tester and *Air*

Traffic Controller, a guaranteed pleaser for those who can stand the strain. Game graphics aren't state of the art, but there is some enjoyment to be had.

FORE!

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This is a somewhat more complicated simulation of golf than most of the other videogames on the subject, but it should be enjoyable even to those who don't get out on the links and bat the little white ball around. A pair of courses and a driving range (for practice) await the electronic golfer, with each hole depicted on a colorful graphics display that can distinguish among six types of terrain.

The player's performance on a given hole is a result of three decisions modified by the intricacies of the hole. The golfer chooses a club from a bag containing 15, lines up the shot and determines how hard the swing is to be. The display shows the flight of the ball during each shot.

FREE FALL

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Climbing (Inverted)
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Tired of just hanging around? Push the action button and your on-screen representative lets go of the beam at the top of the playfield and begins his descent toward one of the four safe landing bays at the bottom. Along the way, he can latch onto one of the moving platforms that travels across the screen, each row heading in the opposite direction, as a means to re-orient the fall. But watch out for the deadly falling spikes!

The second level introduces bouncers that can spell death if one touches the free faller, and the third tacks on gunners that will shoot at you during the journey down the screen. This isn't quite as cute-looking as some other Mark Turmell programs, but it maintains his reputation for concocting games that really test your mental and physical faculties.

GALACTIC GLADIATORS

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Enter the gladiatorial arena of the future with your custom-picked combat team to do battle against a similar squad commanded by another human opponent or the computer. Each of the various types of creatures (there are more than a dozen) are rated for such qualities as strength, endurance and dexterity, and there is a wide choice of offensive and defensive weapons available.

GOBLINS

Highlands Computer Services
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $27.50
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

Take a fantasy trip to Goblin country with this illustrated adventure. The drawings are reasonably detailed, but are also a trifle on the crude side. Figure out the puzzles, fight the monsters and win treasures untold.

GUADALCANAL CAMPAIGN

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This electronic war game simulates a key phase of the Pacific Theater of the second world war for solitaire and head-to-head play. This program corresponds to the so-called "monster" non-electronic war games. Certainly, completing its 294-turn scenario is one significant task, even though *Guadalcanal Campaign* is easier to learn and faster to actually play than any conventional multi-map simulation.

GUARDIAN

Continental Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The minute your on-screen defender-of-goodness fires a shot, the ring of assorted creatures circling the maze in the center of the display rushes directly at him with lethal intent. The arcader must employ a deft combination of marksmanship and movement to shoot the creatures while making for the teleport chamber that can transport him to the next-highest maze level. The hitch: the teleportation device moves from corner to corner randomly, changing position each time the guardian shoots a monster.

This game would receive much higher ratings if a programming oversight didn't make it possible for the guardian to slip through the ring of creatures and start the attack from outside of the deadly circle. A house rule that prevents the guardian from moving until he has fired at least one shot cures the deficiency, though.

HI-RES COMPUTER GOLF

Avant Garde Creations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

One to four electronic golfers can choose from five different courses in this computer golf simulation. For each shot, you must pick the proper club, allow for factors like wind direction and choose the right strength swing.

HORSE RACING CLASSIC

Tazumi Software International
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $36.95
Category: Sports/Gambling
Number of Players: Any

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 8

One hundred horses, many of which sport the names if not the bloodlines of championship steeds of the past, are available to run in the nine-race program. The computer gives handicappers $100 pocket money as a stake, and provides accurate information about each horse's performance in the previous couple of races, as an index to predicting probable finishes in the event at hand.

Once all the bets are down, the display shifts to a representation of a track. Here, in crude-but-servicable animation, the actual race is won, the winners are posted and the victorious bettors collect all their loot. *Horse Racing Classic* is about as close as you're likely to come to the sport of kings without visiting a real track.

INVASION ORION

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $24.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

The aliens are coming and, as admiral of a heavily armed spacefleet composed of up to nine warships, your task is to stop them at all costs. Your vessels are equipped with a variety of formidable weapons, but you must use great care in allotting your limited supply of energy to the various functions which require power on each craft.

There are 10 scenarios, ranging from ship-vs-ship dogfights to small fleet actions, included. *Invasion Orion* can be played at three different skill levels.

JUGGLER

Innovative Design Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Catch
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

As the juggler moving back and forth across the bottom of the screen, you must keep the three objects on the screen in the air at all times. There's a chute on the left and a maze on the right to slow down the Earthward trip, but mostly you'll have to launch rays from the juggler's hands that will keep the items flying. Hitting the space bar repeatedly increases the number of supporting "dishes", helping you push the ball, ax or whatever a bit higher.

At the start of play, the arcader can choose one of seven skill levels. The game will automatically advance in difficulty whenever the player successfully juggles the objects until the on-screen countdown clock reaches zero. The higher the level, the smaller, flimsier and weaker the "dishes" grow.

KAMIKAZE

Hayden Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

While on patrol in the Pacific Islands during World War II, your ship comes under attack from the Japanese airforce. High and low altitude bombers streak across the sky, one at a time, in opposite directions, dropping bombs on your craft as they pass. You start with a supply of five ships, but you'll begin losing them faster as dive-bombing suicide planes and floating mines add to the dangers which you must confront.

LASER BOUNCE

Hayden Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

The two cities which occupy the left and right sides of the display have fought so long that it's getting progressively harder to launch a direct attack. The only way for one combatant to hurt the other is by bouncing laser beams off passing satellites in such a way as to reflect the destructive energy over the central defense wall and into the opposing city.

There are two types of satellites. One sends any ray which hits it straight down to the ground and the other causes the angle of reflection for the ray to be the same as the angle of incidence. Each city also has a shield, activated by moving your aiming cross-hair all the way to the side and hitting the button. There are two limitations: you can only use the shield three times in a row, and it must be energized before a beam reflects off a satellite.

LAZER MAZE

Avant Garde Creations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Strategy
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Figuring the angles is the key to success at this strategy game which utilizes the complication of a maze as its prime element. The idea is to quickly figure out where a laser blast, fired from a random point along the edge of the maze, will emerge after bouncing off randomly positioned deflectors. The speed and accuracy of your determination of the ray's probable path produces the score.

MARS CARS

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The treasure vaults of the red planet beckon, but you'll have to dismantle the chambers brick by brick, using your exploration vehicle, while dodging the automotive robots which the long-dead Martian race built to protect its wealth. Once you pick up the treasures found in each corner of a playfield, you may exit through the portal on the right edge of the screen, moving onward to even greater challenges in the next vault.

MASK OF THE SUN

Ultrasoft
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1
Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

The hunt for the eldritch artifact will take you deep into ancient pyramids in this spectacularly illustrated adventure which, at its publication, represented a major artistic advance over earlier use of pictures to enhance text quest games. When your on-screen hero moves from place to place, the shift is smoothly animated instead of an abrupt switch to another still-life drawing. That is, if you're driving toward something in your jeep, you will see it appear in the distance and grow larger as you near it. Some of the drawings are even animated, and you'll see some strange transformations and such in *Mask of the Sun*.

The artwork itself is excellent, fully up to the best the field has to offer. All these frills surround a solid storyline that will keep adventurers on their toes.

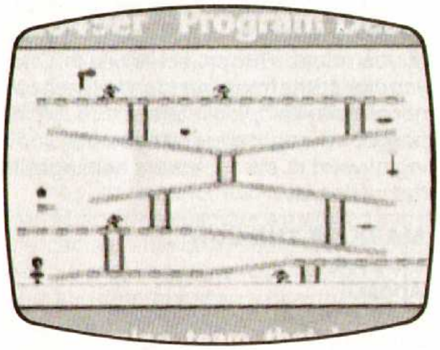
MICROWAVE

Cavalier
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1-2
Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Play the part of Teddy the Salvage Man, who must scout around spaceships, repairing computers and picking up useful equipment scattered throughout. But life isn't all that simple. Teddy must work fast to keep his life support system operating, while also avoiding aliens and their strategically-placed bombs. Only Teddy's wits and his microwave dish blasts can complete the tasks. Controls are by keyboard or joystick. Musical sound effects are almost *too* good to believe.

MINER 2049er

MicroFun
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1-2



Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

As Bounty Bob, a prospector of the future, you must comb every inch of each of 10 mining stations in a hunt for mineral wealth. This requires making Bob jump chasms, defeat mutants (after finding the rainbow-colored Apples that make them temporarily vulnerable), and wrestle with play features such as slides, moving platforms and elevators — all at top speed to preserve as much of the bonus as possible.

Each mining station screen introduces a new play feature. By the final playfield, Bounty Bob is chomping dynamite so that he can hop into a waiting cannon and rocket to the top of the playfield like a cannonball.

MONSTER MASH

The Software Farm
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: Pending
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The monsters are getting ready to break out of the graveyard and have a bit of nocturnal fun at the expense of the local village. Fortunately, you have installed monster mashers into each tombstone. As the creatures appear on the screen, usually but not always in the upper left-hand corner, the computerist plays keys 1-4 to move the gates which channel the route the creatures are taking, and plays 5-8 to work the mashers. In the basic game, each function can be activated with a single button. The advanced level gives the player a chance to use more subtle strategy by assigning each row of gates and each row of mashers to a different key.

MONSTER MAZE

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Monster Maze differs from the usual maze-chase game in that the player sees the corridors as he or she would, if he were actually running along them instead of looking down from above. There is an overhead version of the labyrinth, but it draws only fleeting glances from players anxious to find out where they are in the overall scheme of things. Most of the time, you'll be studying the mouse-eye view that dominates the screen.

The game's play mechanics are relatively straightforward. You move through the corridors, scooping up gold bars and avoiding any confrontation with the monsters unless you have first managed to gobble up an energizer. The maze contains nine floors of action, whereupon things start all over again at a more taxing level of difficulty.

MORLOC'S TOWER

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The city of Hagedorn will be a mound of rubble when the new moon rises tonight, unless you, Brian Hammerhand, fight your way into the tower of the evil warlock Morloc and slay the arch villain in his den before the fiend can carry out his dastardly plan. A dozen different monsters, including the wily wizard, will challenge your skill in 30 rooms. Prizes include a magic sword, three rings, amulets and more.

NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGNS: 1813 & 1815

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 10

Two major battles are covered in this electronic war game, Leipzig (1813) and the more famous Waterloo (1815). Two-player versions of both are provided, or you can play solo. In that event, the computer can conduct a satisfyingly intelligent campaign as the Allies in Leipzig or as the French in Waterloo. The course of the battle is clearly depicted on multiple high-res color graphics screens with numerous computer-stored play-aids to help the commanders supervise operations. Doing much to enhance the "fog of war" is that all orders are given and all reports received through dispatches. This does much to give this excellent piece of software something of the feel of the military period being simulated.

NEPTUNE

Gebelli Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This time, it's robot *amphibians* that are causing a whole lot of trouble. As the commander of the submarine Neptune, your job, in this spine tingling scroller, is to search out and destroy the enemy. Too bad, some of the enemy's minions are impervious to both your bombs and lasers, eh? These must simply be avoided, and that isn't always an easy task as quarters can get stiflingly close as you navigate the undersea channels.

NIGHTMARE GALLERY

Synergistic Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Another outing similar in play mechanics to *Centipede*, only this time the opponents are werewolves, vampire bats, ghouls, ghosts and mummies. Gamer controls gun at bottom of screen with an unlimited supply of ammunition and a limited supply of shields. Points are awarded for shooting down scary foes. Play is accomplished through keyboard or paddles, and both work well.

ODYSSEY

Synergistic Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $30.00
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This is part of a continuing series which has, as its immediate sequel, *Adventure to Atlantis*. Combining elements of both the action adventure and straight-out arcade contests, this illustrated program sends the would be hero across the Sargalo Sea to explore the island — *and* the castles and caves it contains. Ultimately, your goal is to put together the necessary men and material to defeat the Caliph of Lapour.

PIE MAN

Penguin Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Gamer is given the job of putting topping and cherries on pies as they come off a conveyor. If he isn't quick enough the pie will drop off the end of the conveyor and splash on the floor. When that happens seven times the game is over. Grease spots on the floor, sacks of flour sitting in the way and a tipsy baker who occasionally stumbles through are the main obstacles. Besides a display of the number of pies you've completed, there's also a rating from lead baker down to "you're fired!".

PIG PEN

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Here's an unusual, if slightly off-putting switch on the standard eat-the-dots contest. You're a pig in a pen, and as the other swine chase you, you lay down a little trail of dots in your wake. The wild pigs will rake you with their tusks if they catch you, unless you gain extra energy from the pulsating pig pills found at strategic locations within the maze.

POOL 1.5

Innovative Design Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This hi-res pool program for the Apple plays four different versions of the popular table sport: eight-ball, rotation, straight pool and nine ball. One to four cue-sters can participate, with a pair of participants alternating on each paddle controller.

The shooter aims the cue ball with the paddle, noting where the aiming line, which emanates from the ball, indicates it will travel after the shot, and then establishes both the speed of the shot and any "english" to be put on the sphere.

This is a fine simulation. It even has a slow motion replay for viewing that great shot — or frustrating near-miss — a second time.

QUADRANT 6112

Sensible Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Gamer is assigned to guard a quadrant in space, in a ship armed with a laser cannon and a limited supply of heat seekers. Points are scored for destroying aliens, but also, in a novel thought, for completing a scouting trip around the quadrant. Game uses paddles. Button is used both to fire and to turn on thrusters and move the ship around the screen.

RACE FOR MIDNIGHT

Avant-Garde
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

An adventure that is starting to show its age, yet was quite good for the time it came out. Lacking in documentation, but not in variety. For some historical perspective on computers in adventure gaming, this probably would be an ideal purchase. Those hooked on current state of the art packages had best look elsewhere.

REPTON

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

The Star Fighter Armageddon is all that stands between the Quorriors and complete conquest of the once-peaceful planet Repton. As the captain of this maneuverable and well-armed craft, you must cruise over the surface of the planet, guided at times by the secondary "radar scope" display, and do battle with an amazing assortment of alien vessels. Some of them shoot disintegrator rays, some lay space mines, another sort drains the energy from the planetary power grid, and a few just watch the fun.

The Armageddon fires rockets from its nose and can also utilize defensive shields and an occasional nuclear "smart bomb". Once you destroy the first wave, an even tougher one will take its place. If, however, the aliens finish construction on their super-weapon, you will have one final showdown beneath the surface of Repton.

RESCUE AT RIGEL

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This blends the system Automated has developed for its fantasy-tinged action adventures with the background introduced in *Invasion Orion*. You are the intrepid hero Smitty, and your mission is to penetrate the orbiting prison where the High Tollah holds 10 humans under duress. Can you navigate the dangerous corridors and rescue the hostages before they're turned into insectoid monsters?

REVERSAL

Hayden Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Classic Strategy Boardgame
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding

Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

The popular disc-flipping game, whether you call it *Reversi* or *Othello*, is a seesaw battle of wits for two human players or a solo gamer against the computer. Viewed by some as a simplified offshoot of the classic Oriental strategy contest, Go, *Reversal* is a battle to cap the ends of a row of your opponents pieces so that they may be flipped over to show your color. Players count up their discs once the eight by eight board is full, with the one having the greatest number of discs a winner.

ROAD TO GETTYSBURGH

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Good graphics and a simple-to-implement control scheme enliven this reasonably accurate recreation of the Battle of Gettysburgh from the American Civil War. You can command either the Union or Confederate armies and see if you can do better than the original commanders, Lee and Meade. *Road to Gettysburgh* is a fairly straightforward electronic war game, so hand-eye coordination required is quite minimal.

RUSSKI DUCK

Gebelli Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The Director of the C.I.A. has sent you to a major American city to stop those sinister Soviets from smuggling the plans for the MX missile out of the country (hidden in a duck decoy). Your on-screen agent moves from building to building — seen in overhead perspective — hunting for the crates that may hide the duck, as well as the tools, needed to pry open the boxes so they can be searched. Enemy agents will try to stop your spy and are also running in and out of buildings, moving various objects from place to place in a random fashion. If you can restore such property to its rightful owners, you get extra brownie points.

Russki Duck is an unusual cross between an action adventure and a maze chase. It would receive a higher set of ratings if the nice graphic images on the screen were larger, making it easier to tell one from the other.

SARGON II

Hayden Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95 (disk)
$29.95 (tape)
Category: Classic Strategy Boardgame
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

This is surely one of the classic electronic strategy game programs. It plays an excellent game of chess at seven different levels of skill.

SEAFOX

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Your submarine must sink the ships of the convoys which steam across the surface of the water near the top of the screen. These cargo vessels are protected by a line of hospital ships (which are able to deflect your torpedoes), destroyer escorts on the surface, and hostile submarines and mines beneath the waves. The conflict starts with just the subs (both sides), hospital ships and convoys, and becomes more complicated as the gamer advances to progressively higher levels of play.

The arcader gets three ships, available one at a time as the previous one heads for Davy Jones' Locker. A ship starts with 1200 fuel units and 30 torpedoes and must resupply from a green submarine that cruises along the sea floor at regular intervals.

SERPENTINE

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

You must pit your tame blue snakes against the larger wild ones in this strategy contest of dueling reptiles. A larger snake always eats the smaller one if they meet head-on, but any snake can make a snake of a fellow serpent by catching up to it from behind. Both good and bad snakes periodically lay eggs which can turn into babies of the same kind if they survive long enough to hatch.

Little serpents grow in several ways. They gain a segment by eating a small snake head-on, gobbling up the frog that hops from place to place within the labyrinth, or crunching an egg laid by an enemy snake.

If you destroy all rival serpents on a level, any of your eggs will hatch to produce new baby blue snakes, and the action moves to a different maze at a higher level of difficulty.

S.E.U.I.S.

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

The initials stand for "Shoot 'Em Up in Space", and this is, indeed, a thinking person's approach to the standard spacewar action game. You must, during the strategic phase, build your ships from a choice of six prototypes, form them into squadrons and then form those components into your main fleet. Strategically, you must move through space, conquering enemy and neutral planets so that you can build up your space navy even further. When the focus shifts to the ship to ship level, *S.E.U.I.S.* becomes an arcade style combat contest in which poor marksmanship and faulty reflexes can undo all your fine generalship.

SHUTTLE INTERCEPT

Hayden Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Steering
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The firmament is full of space junk, and you must pilot your craft so that you can snare friendly satellites as they zoom past from right to left with your skyhook. There are also enemy satellites to confuse you, and missiles and flying saucers will also try to derail you from completing your mission.

Each round of satellite spearing is separated by a breakneck ride through hyperspace, where missiles and meteors may well inflict further damage. The action is moderately interesting, but the graphics appear to be somewhat rough for an Apple II program, more what one would expect in a contest for the Atari 2600.

SNACK ATTACK

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This labyrinth game features multiple mazes and an engaging assortment of audio-visual touches. You are a whale with an appetite to match. Move through the maze and munch the morsels, but watch out for the creatures who will shadow you up and down the corridors.

SNEAKERS

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Superb graphics enliven this multi-screen invasion contest by Mark Turmell and make it enjoyable to watch as well as to play. Turmell is a genius at giving the little critters (trying to wipe out the player's horizontally mobile cannon) as much personality as a Disney cartoon character.

Although the intermissions between each wave *do* get a trifle repetitious once you've played the game for awhile, they do provide much-needed rest periods to recover from the frenetic on-screen action when a flock of nasties is actually on the screen.

SORCERER OF SIVA

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This disk differs from the majority of action adventures in that the gamer directs the activities of a magician rather than a sword-slinging warrior. Armed with only a dagger and an assortment of incantations, you must quickly penetrate the five levels of the Mine of Siva to the exit, which lies somewhere on the fifth floor.

Along the way, you'll have the chance to fight an assortment of creatures and, should you triumph in combat, you can take the treasures to be found in many of the game's 300 separate rooms.

SOUTHERN COMMAND

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

This smoothly programmed machine language game replicates the Egypt-Israeli hostilities during the 1973 Mideast War at the battalion level. Special features include both hidden and delayed movement options, the latter of which can be used to engineer some pretty amazing ambushes.

The game can be play head-to-head using a number of scenarios, including free placement of units, or solitaire, with the computer handling the chores for the Egyptian forces.

SPY'S DEMISE

Penguin
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

If the game made a bit better use of controls it could be a 9 or 10. Gamers start out at the bottom of a building and must cross each floor, while avoiding the guards that ride up and down in rapidly-moving elevators. Each time a building is conquered, part of the overall puzzle is revealed. First person in each state to get the entire puzzle done, gets a T-shirt. Not a lot of play, but sure is a lot of fun. Can use keyboard, joystick or paddle control.

STAR BLASTER

Piccadilly Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

One of the most difficult of the space shoot-outs. Eight levels of difficulty will keep most gamers occupied for years. At each level a different type of attack will be presented, including mines, invaders, comets, force fields, guardians and the dreaded Dragonian Annihilator. Game can be played by paddle or joystick, but not keyboard. Scant documentation makes first few trips through a real learning experience.

STAR BLAZER

Broderbund
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $31.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Imaginative and highly detailed graphics are featured in this science fiction shoot-out that gets an extra spark from the incorporation of some aspects of the action adventure. You can't just shoot your way through the various scenarios of *Star Blazer*, or else you'll never get past the tank that speeds up when your plane does, and can travel just a mite faster.

Time is also a crucial consideration. You must watch the screen for the periodic appearance of the refueling vessel — and then you must catch the little package of provisions before something happens to it or it bursts open upon hitting the ground.

STARCROSS

Infocom
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The system that makes the *Zork* series so outstanding adapts very well to the needs of this science fiction-themed contest of exploration and discovery, aboard an enigmatic starship, sent to our part of the galaxy by another sentient race.

Hub of the game is the excellent system of order entry. The program has a huge vocabulary and can understand some surprisingly intricate sentences. And if it doesn't comprehend what it is you're trying to do, it prints out a message that provides material aid in recasting your order in understandable form.

STAR-MAZE

Sir-Tech
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Taking off from a mother ship somewhere in a maze so vast that only a small portion of it fits on the display screen at any one time, the player uses a light hand on the controls to move the starcruiser along the vast corridors. This videogame employs a thrust-movement system not too different from the one found in *Asteroids*, but its effect seems entirely different within the context of the maze.

The objective is to search the corridors for nine space jewels which the starcruiser can tow to the mother ship. Clearing the maze of these prizes moves the action to the next higher level. The labyrinth is patrolled by an assortment of dangers, including enemy ships and saucers, hurtling meteors and the mysterious bug train.

STAR THIEF

Cavalier
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

There are eight power pods in the center of the screen that must be defended against the aliens, who will try to steal them off the screen. When all eight are gone, the game is over. Gamer has the choice, either alone or in a team, to shoot down or destroy the marauders. Getting shot by the attackers or ramming them causes the ship to disappear from the screen for a few seconds, leaving the pods vulnerable to theft. Has training format for beginners and can be played by keyboard or paddles.

STAR WARRIOR

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This combat game incorporates many elements of the action/adventure in its portrayal of one-person missions of vengeance carried out by futuristic paladins sheathed in battle armor. A broad selection of simple keystroke commands lets the player jump, run, fly and shoot as the on-screen Fury attempts to complete one of two possible missions on the planet Fornax. You can elect to carry out a search-and-destroy diversionary attack or else take on the perilous assignment of assassinating the ruler, who currently holds the planet in an iron grip of tyranny.

SUCCESSION

Piccadilly Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Average
Overall Rating: 6

A maze chase with a different twist. Gamer controls the masher, who is pursued by the chaser. He must avoid the chaser while nibbling some mobile little creatures from within the maze. The twist comes from the numbers on the critters he's chasing. They must be gulped in numerical order. First time one is taken out of order, all the points accumulated are gone. Plays only with keyboard, a disadvantage in maze games.

SWASHBUCKLER

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Yo, ho ho, on a dead man's chest, it's time to travel back to the period when the Jolly Roger rode the high seas and duels to the death on decks of ships awashed with the blood of war were commonplace. The gamer controls the swashbuckler with a selection of easily memorized single-stroke commands, which allow the hero to move around, take up various defensive postures and launch several different types of sword attacks.

In general, the attackers come out one at a time from opposite sides of the screen. The pace escalates very quickly, however, and it will be a sweet sword-swinger, indeed, who can last more than a few minutes when steel meets steel.

TANKTICS

Avalon Hill
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This program is ideal for the dyed-in-the-wool board war gamer who can never find an appropriate opponent for a rousing game of Panzerblitz. *Tanktics*, which comes with a mounted map board and cardboard pieces, can give you a good match in this tactical strategy contest.

TELEPORT

Cavalier
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

Difficult game in which gamer must neutralize the aliens and take them, one at a time, through the infinity doors and back to their own world. The only catch is that the aliens are arriving faster so that only the most competent can take them back, and running into any of them will lose a robot life. There are two teleport doors that will randomly take you away from the present location and deposit you elsewhere on the screen. Works with Votrax Speech Synthesizer, or without.

TEMPLE OF APSHAI

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Despite the fact that *Temple of Apshai* is one of the oldest action-adventures programmed for the Apple, it still holds its own with most of the newer quest games. More than 30 different video-monsters, each represented on the screen by a unique graphic symbol, prowl the multi-level maze that is located beneath the mysterious temple.

The player enters the orders for the on-screen warrior by using the proper single-stroke keyboard commands. Fighting takes place in real time, which lends a note of urgency to the battles that would not otherwise be present.

THAROLIAN TUNNELS

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out Invasion Game
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This multi-scenario game begins as an

invasion contest in which you must defeat rows of attackers with your horizontally mobile — but unshielded — cannon. If you get past this rain of death, you advance to the next section in which you must maneuver your craft down one of the skinniest tunnels you'll ever see. You can blast away sections of the walls when you think the fit is too tight, but don't expect to have the surplus of power that would make frequent use of this tactic feasible.

And if you can get through the tunnel, you'll find yourself enmeshed in a tense dodging and shooting phase as you rocket toward the bottom edge of the screen in a north-south tunnel.

THE CHAMBERS OF XENOBIA

Avant-Garde
Apple II - Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $15.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 5

One of the early *Adventure* games. Now lags behind in graphics, but the game system and challenge isn't bad, especially for beginners. There is absolutely no documentation, so be prepared to struggle a bit, but it just might be worth it, for specific tastes.

THE DATESTONES OF RYN

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Rex the Reaver's band of cutthroats has stolen the datestones from the ducal calendar of Ryn. The hero-for-hire, Brian Hammerhand, has only 20 minutes *in real time* to storm the rogues' hideout and emerge bearing the precious datestones. A competitive scoring system helps home arcaders judge whether they're improving from game to game, but the real test is to see how quickly you can round up those elusive stones and get back to civilization.

Using single-stroke keyboard commands, the gamer guides Brian Hammerhand through a cave-maze sketched on the screen by the computer in overhead perspective. The computer keeps track of how may datestones and other treasures you find during the course of your quest.

THE SNAPPER

Silicon Valley Systems
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $32.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

You control a carnivorous creature known as the snapper, which you move along the gridlines of the maze in a quest to eat as many blots as possible before you run out of time. The snapper can ingest as many blots in a row as desired, but the player must steer the creature to one of the bases located in each quadrant of the playfield in order to get them counted. The more blots you eat before reporting to one of the bases, the higher your score will be because the value of each consecutive blot increases, resetting only when a base is visited. Striving to stop you are whirlers, which move around the grid like the snapper, and a gamma radiation belt that sweeps back and forth across the display.

THIEF

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The gamer controls an on-screen character who must move from room to room in a maze-like complex, shooting it out with hostile robots patrolling the area. You can eliminate a metal monster by shooting it directly, moving in such a way that the android blunders into a lethal wall, or trick a pair of robots into shooting each other when they have lined up to catch you in a crossfire.

TIGERS IN THE SNOW

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

The Battle of the Bulge is one of the most frequently simulated conflicts in the non-electronic war gaming field, and this computer version makes an excellent complement to the tabletop boardgames on the subject. The computer can provide decent opposition as either the Germans or the Allies, though head-to-head play is superior.

A high-resolution hex grid map provides a setting for the action. The influence of terrain on both movement and fighting is very important, though numerous other factors are figured into the situation. This is one of the easiest-to-learn of SSI's extensive library of computerized war games.

TRANSYLVANIA

Penguin
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Most stunning graphics in an adventure game this writer has seen, but there is also a good adventure game system included. A damsel in distress must be rescued from this ghoul-filled place, but it will take gamers cunning, bravery *and* quick wits to accomplish the goal. Keyboard is used to enter commands. Vocabulary's large and user friendly.

TUBEWAY

Datamost
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Perimeter Target Shoot
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

This program, which falls into the same overall genre as *Tempest*, challenges the player to move a shooter around the edge of an abstract or geometric shape and blast away at nasties which move toward the rim from the center of the figure. Once an attack reaches the perimeter, it can destroy the shooter if it comes in contact, that's unless the gamer can employ the "super zapper" first. (This is done by hitting the fire button while the lit segment of the rim is under the shooter). If you take too long, an invincible space germ will break out of its cage and chase you.

There are 32 different levels of play, two choices of sound intensity and the option to begin as high as level 8. *Tubeway* is extremely exciting to play, though some manual dexterity is a real plus.

TUESDAY MORNING QUARTERBACK

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair

Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Although the progress of each play is shown in simplified form in a graphic display, the real emphasis in *Tuesday Morning Quarterback* is on calling the best mix of offensive and defensive plays. There is a good selection from which to choose, too. When your team has the ball, you can select from among seven running and eight passing plays, while you may pick one of six possible formations when your outfit is on defense.

The disk also contains a system for maintaining team rosters that allows transfer of athletes from team to team. You can thus use *TMQ* to create your own electronic football league or put together all-star aggregations.

U-BOAT COMMAND

Synergistic
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Game is strategy-based, but without requiring a historical perspective to play. Gamer controls a submarine trying to sink an aircraft carrier. He must also contend with freighters, destroyers and fighter bombers to accomplish his mission. Paddles are used to control aiming of torpedoes or guns, and keyboard shows which of the two screens is in view, the heading of the ship and the speed and depth. Nice feature at the opening of the program allows the gamer to name his country and ship, as well as the computer's country and ship. Fine fun.

UPPER REACHES OF APSHAI

Automated Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This disk is the sequel to the much-acclaimed *Temple of Apshai*. It cannot be played without also having a copy of the original game, though the adventurer has the option of either sending an established character into the 150-room extension or generating a new hero at the local inn.

WARP DESTROYER

Piccadilly Software
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Another challenging space outing, which has several stages of tests. At the start of the game there's subspace, during which the gamer must keep a small cross lined up between firing cross hairs. Next comes the mines, which you must destroy and avoid. Probes need to be shot down and shields need to be used to protect ship from damage when probes explode. Then a massive number of hits are needed to destroy the Zalbian Base. Game is played with paddles, keyboard or joystick, but latter is preferred.

WARP FACTOR

Strategic Simulations
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

The 12 different starship designs incorporated into the program are the hub of this outstanding simulation of space warfare at the tactical level. As a player in any of the program's excellent range of scenarios, you command the fire, movement and other activities of each vessel in your spacefleet against powerful forces guided either by a second human or the computer.

The simulation is fairly minute in several respects. For instance, the commander must allocate energy use, including the distribution of power to the defensive shields, for each ship in the starfaring armada. Fortunately, SSI's elegant control system allows the player to accomplish order entry faster than many would have believed possible.

WAVY NAVY

Sirius Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $34.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

By adding a few novel details to the basic invasion game genre, designer Rodney McAuley has produced something rather special. You control the cartoonish boat that rides over the waves at the bottom of the playfield, as you fire up-screen at the airplanes and helicopters hanging there in formation above the sea. If you don't blow these targets away fast enough, however, the planes begin arcing dives toward your ship, and the helicopters drop altitude for machine gun attacks.

Once you've cleared off the first wave, a second appears. This time the wave motion is much more dramatic, causing the player to constantly shift his position to avoid intersecting the marine mines that float, one at a time, across the screen from right to left. Subsequent rounds further increase the difficulty.

ZENITH

Gebelli Software
Apple II
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: First-person Piloting and Shooting
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

This is perhaps the best of several games of this general type which Nasir has designed over the last few years. You cruise over the surface of the artificial planet Zenith, putting out fires, shooting attacking alien spaceships and capturing the outer space invaders, using your tractor beam, so you can swap them for a new supply of fuel. At any time during the course of play, the would-be Captain Kirk can toggle to a secondary display that shows the current status of every location on the surface of Zenith as a schematic map.

The grid-like graphics, smacking faintly of the quadrascan look, give *Zenith* a distinctive appearance. There's also a nice piece of artistic minimalism in the brief animated sequence that accompanies your ship's passage through hyperspace to where the alien mother ship is waiting to make the prisoners-for-fuel exchange.

ZERO GRAVITY PINBALL

Avant-Garde Creations
Apple II — Disk/48K
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Pinball
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 7

Taking pinball into outer space isn't nearly as exciting as to why it has been done. The step has been made to give a new dimension to pinball simulations. Player controls 10 flippers, but only one is active at a time. Selection of flipper is key to good scores. Only drawback is that keyboard must be used to keep ball from leaving playfield at top or bottom of screen.

ATARI 400/800/1200XL

ABUSE

Don't Ask Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

This oddball entry from the aptly-named Don't Ask Software house is perhaps the first *intentionally* "user *un*friendly" program ever written. The gamer sits at the computer keyboard typing a variety of insults into the machine, which responds with its own *touche'*.

If turning your Atari 400/800/1200 into the first Don Rickles Machine is your idea of fun, this wacko title may press your button. Without graphics, however, the novelty may wear thin before very long.

ACTION QUEST

J.V. Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Five levels each containing six rooms are the setting for this cross between an action adventure and a maze-shoot-out. You are represented by a ghost who moves from room to room, trying to collect treasures while eliminating the monsters who have other plans for such prizes. Holding down the action button transforms the ghost into a gun, which can then be aided using the stick. Letting go of the button fires a single bullet in the indicated direction.

Scoring is based on a combination of the number of prizes captured and the speed with which the ghost negotiates the entire labyrinth. It's possible to start on one of the tougher levels, but this reduces the gamer's maximum possible score, since it is then impossible to gather up any treasures that are in the skipped rooms.

ADVENTURELAND

Scott Adams Adventures
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K Tape or disk
Suggested Retail Price: $28.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Followers of adventures who are still interested in the earliest type of computer adventure ("text" games, which consist solely of commands typed on-screen by the player and the computer's response) will find this an excellent primer.

An entire line of adventures in this format are available from Scott Adams under the "Adventure International" banner, including *Voodoo Island* and *The Count*.

AIRSTRIKE

English Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Tape or disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Graphically excellent home version of the *Super-Cobra* genre of scrolling shoot-out, in which the player must move through a cavernous maze while destroying fuel and ammo.

The game's sole weak point is a ludicrous play mechanic which requires gamers to both manipulate a joystick as well as a keyboard, since the space bar is used to drop bombs. Especially unplayable on the 400 with its flat keyboard. Action button triggers horizontal lazer fire while stick dictates direction.

ALI BABA

Quality Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 8

This action-adventure is one of the few programs for the Atari computer systems that takes advantage of the fact that both the 400 and 800 have four ports for attaching joysticks. Up to that number of gamers can participate, each entering movement and combat instructions with the stick, following some simple-to-understand, on-screen prompts.

Ali Baba is an unusual adventure in that it does not take place in the ordinary quasi-medieval fantasy realm. Instead, the action occurs in the rather more exotic Middle East, and is redolent of the "Tales of the Arabian Nights".

ASTEROIDS

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Science Fiction Target
Number of Players: 1-4 (alternating

turns)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The player's ship begins at the center of the screen with space boulders of various sizes moving randomly across the playfield. The gamer must destroy the asteroids and avoid being hit.

Large asteroids, when hit, become two smaller asteroids, each of which will then be metamorphosized into a pair of mini-meteoroids. The smaller the target, the greater the point value.

Movement is accomplished through thrust propulsion — i.e., you point the ship's nose in the right direction and thrust. To stop or alter course, turn the craft directly around and apply an equal or greater amount of reverse thrust.

BAJA BUGGIES

Gamestar
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Racing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Using the flat, winding Baja Desert as the backdrop, players use joysticks to move their balloon-tired dune buggies to the front of a long line of sand-speeders.

The player's car is positioned in the lower foreground, along with the mountainous backdrop shifting and rolling as the road twists and slithers through the desert's overt-like atmosphere.

At the base of the screen, a radar chart indicates both the gamer's position and the position of the current leader. It's the player's job to pass everyone and battle to the lead position.

BASKETBALL

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Outstanding
Overall Rating: 9

Classic Al Miller-designed contest uses a trapezoidal playfield to simulate a three-dimensional roundball court. Players can take on the computer in one-on-one action (to prove how smart the computer is, it always takes the black player), go head-to-head with other arcaders, or even go for two-coach/two player teams with passing options.

A shot's success is determined by the player's distance from and position, with regards to the basket. In other words, this is a game of percentage shots. Stand under the basket and you'll never miss. The farther the on-screen player stands, the harder the shot, and the lower the chances for success. Shooting angles are chosen by the gamer. The player in possession of the ball, when not dribbling, will move his arms up over his head and back down. A shot from overhead will get you a skyhook, with lower positions altering the angle.

BRITISH HERITAGE JIGSAW PUZZLE, VOL. 1

Thorne-EMI
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Puzzle
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Even non-jigsaw puzzle fans may find themselves enchanted by this computerized version of the ancient amusement, consisting of restructuring a shattered image.

The picture here is the Tower of London and the Tower Bridge.

CAPTIVITY

PDI
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 24K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Although it has since been eclipsed in terms of play-action sophistication, *Captivity's* basic concept and perfectly adequate line-drawing graphics make it timeless.

Players attempt to maneuver through a labyrinth, seen from a first person perspective. Overhead peeks can be had — only at the cost of precious time spent, however, and points.

CARNIVAL

A.N.A.L.O.G.
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.90
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Originally released as *Shooting Gallery*, this title has now been officially licensed from Sega, retitled and repackaged. Rows of animals, simulations of the tin targets found at carnival shooting galleries, pipes and bullet-eating ducks, roll down three horizontal rows in serpentine fashion, with stars and target/bulls eyes appearing for extra ammo targets.

Accompanied by caliope music, the critters are worth the most points on the top row, losing value as they descend. If the duck reaches the bottom, though, he'll scarf down several precious bullets.

The game ends when the ballistics run out.

CAVERNS OF MARS

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

A sort of vertically-downward scrolling version of a *Super Cobra*-type contest. Players are sent soaring down into the yawning cavern chosen from the multitude of such thin, armed canyons on the Red Planet. Fuel and ammo dumps must be destroyed on the way down to avoid destruction (and running out of gas). Upon reaching the bottom, the trip begins anew — this time back up to the surface.

CENTIPEDE

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-4 (alternating)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

A new wrinkle is added to the standard horizontally-scrolling invasion game by allowing the player's cannon some vertical mobility as well. On a mushroom-littered field, players aim to destroy a bevy of buggers, from the multi-segmented centipede who moves down the screen in serpentine fashion, to the dropping spiders, dive-bombing fleas and other assorted nasties making cameo appearances for bonus points (such as the scorpion, who also serves to poison the mushrooms).

Centipede features auto-fire and works well with the Atari-compatible tracballs. Based on the Atari coin-op.

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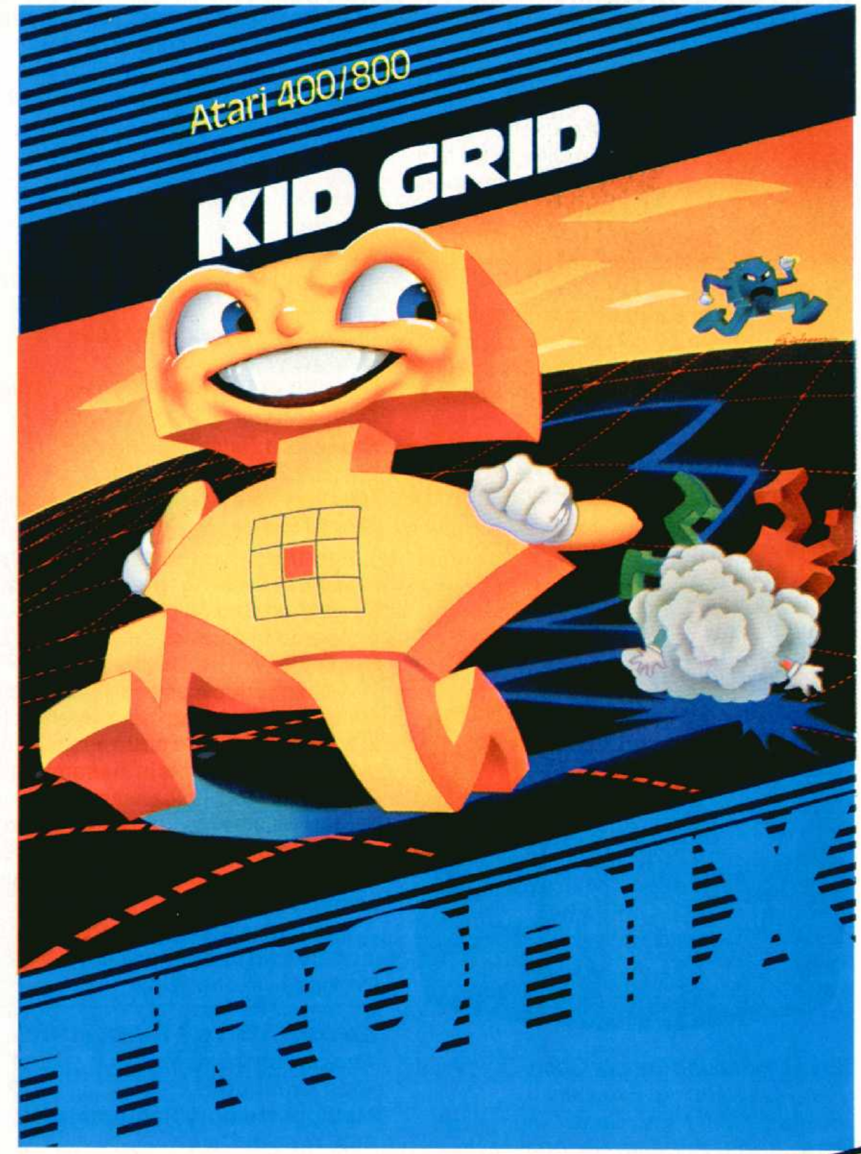

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Dealer inquiries invited.

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TRONIX

CROSSFIRE

Sierra/On Line
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

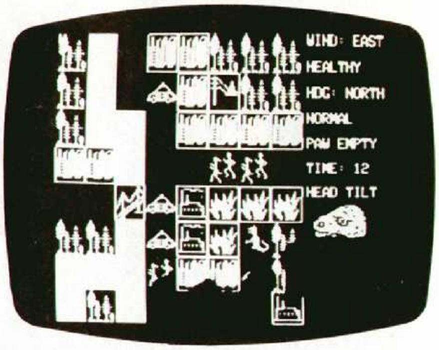
Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Fantastically enjoyable take-off on the old coin-op cult fave, *Targ*, this title has a four-directional player's cannon moving around city blocks as seen from above, while under siege from a swarm of alien life forms which must be blasted four times in order to eliminate them.

Bonus rollers appear periodically on the colorful seven by six grid, simulating an overview of 36 city blocks. Play this one from the corners to cut down on the number of possible attack angles.

CRUSH, CRUMBLE & CHOMP!

Automated Simulations/Epyx
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $23.25
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1



Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Players portray a variety of Japanese-inspired monsters who must do a variety of things—as predetermined by the player—to a city in terror. Whether gulping down soldiers or doing damage without causing harm to humans, this is an unusual adventure program with enough uniqueness to guarantee it a place in the pantheon of desirable graphic-adventures.

CYPHER BOWL

Artsci, Incorporated
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K Cassette and Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 6

This vertically-scrolling football simulation offers 256 combinations of offensive terror and killer Ds. Passing, running and a full kicking game are available when in possession of the pigskin while the defenders can pass rush, safety blitz and cover both long and short passes.

A clock ticks the seconds away in the upper right portion of the field, alongside the scoreboard and quarter-marker.

DELUXE INVADERS

Rocklan
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2 (alternating)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

For those gamers who prefer the classical-looking graphics from the souped-up version of *Space Invaders* that appeared in arcades several years back, this is the version for you.

Authentic duplication of the coin-op with some twists, such as the invaders splitting in two when hit, and odd juxtapositions of large and small aliens in the same column. Otherwise, this is the standard invasion contest with the rows of invaders marching down-screen and the player attempting to eliminate them with a horizontally-movable cannon.

Bonus points are garnered for hitting the mystery ship that periodically sails across the top of the playfield.

EMPIRE OF THE OVER-MIND

Avalon Hill Company
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 40K Tape or Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

This prose adventure casts you in the role of the potential savior of two planets, which are currently under the heel of a techno-mystical dictator known as the Over-Mind. Aided by clues contained in a long narrative poem included with the game, the player must explore these twin worlds, battling monsters.

Empire of the Over-Mind doesn't fall into the trap that catches too many puzzle-dungeon programs. The puzzles do not necessarily have to be solved in lock-step order, nor is there only one road to victory.

G.F.S. SORCERESS

Avalon Hill
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Despite the implications of the title, this is straight-out science fiction with a strong suggestion of 1930's pulp space opera. In this text adventure, projected as the first of a series, you are Joe Justin, a spaceman who has been convicted of a crime which he did not commit. The goal is to find a new spaceship, get it in working order and explore the universe, looking for the proof that will clear you of the murder conviction that resulted in your being shoved through an airlock into deep space.

GORF

Rocklan
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This version of an arcade game features four different scenarios: invaders with periodically energized force shields; dive-bombing invaders; swirling invaders and, finally, the mother ship sequence.

In the first field, play is much the same as in *Space Invaders*, with the exception of an on-again/off-again forcefield that destroys all incoming and outgoing fire. The second rack borrows something from *Galaxian*-type shoot-outs, with trios of invaders peeling off from the pack and dropping right at the player's cannon. Rack three involves ships moving in a circular route from a focal point, growing larger and larger with each swing around. Finally, against the mother ship, a direct—and highly precise—hit is the only thing that will blow up the invading craft.

HAUNTED HILL

Swifty Software
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Poor
Solitaire Rating: Fair

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synapse
SOFTWARE

5221 Central Avenue, Richmond, CA 94804

Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 4

This is a sort of morbid version of *Centipede* with some interesting twists. Players maneuver stiffly across the base of the playfield, firing up at a field littered with tombstones and a conga-line of vampire bats making their way downscreen. Hitting a bat transforms it into a grave marker, each of which can be hit four times — undergoing a color change with each hit. After hit number four, the stones either vanish or transform into ghosts, who can kill with a touch, but which are worth extra bonus points.

JAWBREAKER

Sierra/On-Line
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $27.00
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

This is the original version of the most magnificent of *Pac-Man*-clones. Instead of a gobbler, we've got chomping teeth moving through a Candyland-type maze dotted with "wife savers" and special treats as bonus items. The ghosts are seen here in the form of "smile"-faced bullies who roll through the maze in search of the chattering choppers. The power pellets are called "jawbreakers" — glowing, multi-colored wife savers that transform the smiling multi-colored bullies into frowning, blue faces, vulnerable to the chomping teeth.

This may be difficult to locate since the new, non-litiginous version has been introduced, but its streaking-smooth play-action and graphic excellence make it worth the search.

JAWBREAKER II

Sierra/On-Line
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $27.00
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Reworking the classic *Jawbreaker* became a necessity when Tigervision picked up the VCS rights but didn't dare incur Atari's legal wrath. The changes made, simplified the game visually, but actually *added* depth and texture to the play-action. Instead of the normally-configured Pac-Maze, the teeth can move freely (so long as no contact is made with the bullies) around the perimeter of the playfield, which consists of scrolling horizontal lanes, with occasional broken space through which the teeth can drop. Bonus objects appear at random and the action button, when depressed, stops the omnivorous teeth in their tracks. The computer version packs all the graphic-audio excellence of the original — complete with musical intermission.

KAYOS

Computer Magic, Limited
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
8K Cassette or disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Space War
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: Fair

Kayos is a duck 'em and blast 'em game set in deep space. You are on the aptly named planet Kayos, and all life — other than your own on-screen player surrogate — has been wiped out. The idea is pure and simple survival — staying alive as long as possible.

K-STAR PATROL

CBS Software
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Scrolling-Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

This is a typical horizontally-oriented scrolling shoot-out, but with a difference; ships in the K-Star squadron are lined up, vertically, at the left side of the playfield and as each of the lead ships is blasted to atoms, one of the substitutes enters the fray. Unfortunately for the gamer, however, those ships sitting so pretty in space, still as a log, are vulnerable to enemy fire and can be wiped out by stray shots.

K-RAZY ANTIKS

CBS Software
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This is an extremely challenging maze contest set in a honeycombed anthill, where the player maneuvers a white ant capable of laying dozens of eggs (which should be spaced as widely apart as possible to protect against their being gobbled up by the enemy ants who stalk the hill.)

The object of the game is to trap all the enemy insects in a centrally positioned pen. There are several ways of accomplishing this. Before entering the hatching stage, for example, the player's ant can pick up a throbbing enemy ant-egg and use it as a drop-bomb to blow up a foe on its tail. The ant is also able to lure its antagonists downscreen just before a periodic rainstorm floods all the lower levels of the bug colony, but be prepared to scurry uptown in a hurry at the first rumbling of thunder.

Finally, there's the anteater who makes the occasional cameo appearance, probing deep into the tunnels with its enormous tongue. Attempt to lure your attackers into that tacky tongue and another one bites the dust. Also keep in mind that so long as one of your ant's eggs remains on-screen, the game will continue.

K-RAZY KRITTERS

CBS Software
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A standard alien invasion contest is enlivened by some clever variations on the now-overfamiliar genre. Each of the various creatures, aligned in the now familiar column, are trapped in varicolored block-like prisons. The gamer's first shot destroys the cage, unleashing a shrieking, bird-like extra-terrestrial with an almost-unerring instinct for homing in on the horizontally-mobile cannon at the base of the playfield. As the play progresses, the bird-beasties become powerful enough to burst their prisons alone, so keep eyes roaming the screen constantly.

K-RAZY SHOOT-OUT

CBS Software
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Maze Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Clearly inspired by the *Bezerk*-type shoot-outs, player surrogates must clear a series of linked mazes of their deadly robot sentries. The mechanical guardians definitely shoot back with each level, growing progressively more difficult.

Scores are determined by everything from the number of shell casings used, to the bonus points awarded when two robots walk into a wall — or each other. Ratings are administered at the end of each play session. Very difficult.

MARATHON

Educational Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Kideogame
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

This program used the "tortoise & the hare" theme to present an entertaining learning experience. Player(s) are tested in simple addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Specific areas can be focused on, or all areas can be tested.

Solving the problems advances the onscreen characters in their fabled race. Every fifth query challenges players at deducing the multiple of a given number as quickly as possible.

MAR TESORO (SEA TREASURE)

Synchro Software
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A simulation of treasure hunting, *Mar Tesoro* uses exacting realism — originally, the player can afford a scuba outfit. Later success makes a deep-sea rig affordable and once the *big* bucks start rolling in, there's even a diving bell for the buying — to create a life experience with everything from uncooperative crews (only if you decide to be stingy and share a small percentage of the haul beforehand, naturally), to loan sharks, who'll break your surrogate's legs should he fail to cover a shaky gamble.

Using an overhead map, players guide their craft to the spot they wish to explore, the farther out, the deeper, and the program then shifts to a side view where the action can be seen even more clearly. There are menaces both above and below the sea, and even a historian to aid in determining the value, if any, of a new find.

MEGALEGS

Megasoft
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

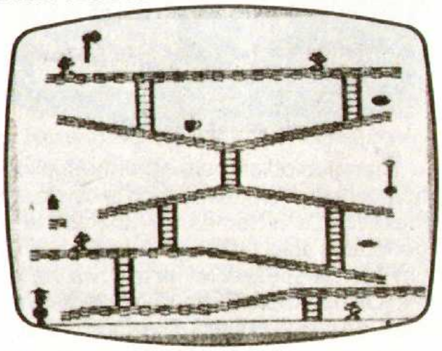
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

A *Centipede*-like arcade contest requires players firing at the thousand-legger moving in zig-zag fashion downscreen, along with an assortment of turtles, mushrooms and the like.

Progressive difficulty factors are programmed into this contest with bonus lives awarded for every 10,000 points scored by the insect-hunting arcader.

MINER 2049er

Big Five Software
Atari 400/800



Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: Pending
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: 10
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Ten separate scenarios are involved in "Bounty Bob's" search for treasure in the strangest mine shafts ever conceived by the mind of man. Jumping, climbing, elevators and even a cannon are used to get Bob from one level to the other, but he still must cover all the playfield's ground and clear out all the gold before advancing to the next level.

The mines are patrolled by strange monsters who can only be defeated after Bob has ingested a power source. Chutes, ladders and a wide variety of skill challenges fill out the 10 rounds.

MISSILE COMMAND

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-4 (alternating turns)

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Three cities are spaced on either side of a missile-launching command center located at the center of the playfield's base. With assaults coming in ever-more lethal waves, the player must position an onscreen cursor in order to blow up all incoming missiles.

Play continues in the computer version of the coin-op classic until all six cities have been lost, with 10,000 bonus points good for a bonus metropolis.

MISSION: ASTEROID

Sierra-On-Line
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $22.00
Category: Illustrated Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

The initial entry in the library of On-Line's illustrated adventures may not be up to the standards of the latest model, but provides an excellent primer for adventurers.

An asteroid is about to smash into Earth and the player is sent into space to blow it up.

ATARI 400/800 COMPUTERS ATARI

GAMES

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MOONBASE 10

P.D.I.
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
32K Both Tape and Disk required
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

This Arkie-winner in the computer category is one of the most unique science fiction games available. The game begins with the player awakening on board a spaceship after a long sleep in suspended animation. The actual game program comes on disk, but the cassette tape is what makes this such an innovative concept. Here the tape is used not as a program format, but for voice and sound-interaction.

Players advance through a series of arcade-style contests, working through a trio of planetary moons with constant commands and updates being piped through the speaker.

Winners even get a personal "well done" from the President!

MOUSEATTACK

Sierra/On-Line
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $31.00
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Unsatisfactory wrinkle in the maze-chase category from the creator of both versions of *Jawbreaker*. Player portrays a valiant plumber working in "Rat Alley" with only a few frightened kitties and mouse traps to defend himself while connecting pipes.

It eventually becomes a strain on the eyes when attempting to determine whether all the pipes have been correctly fitted (players will be hitting the "P" for pause control as often as the joystick action-button in this one). Super-rats appear almost immediately, as well, and they just shred the puny traps.

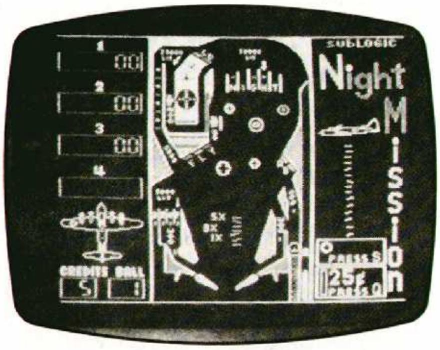
"NIGHT MISSION" PINBALL

SubLogic
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Pinball Simulation
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

Translated — cloned, perhaps, is a better description — from the popular Apple II title, SubLogic's *Night Mission* is a *fast* moving pinball simulation with a World War II bomber raid as its theme.

Moving the joystick will change the night raid into bright daylight on this graphically-beautiful videogame that's complete with bumpers, lanes, and virtually everything but a backlit display board. The playing area is at screen center with the score tabulators, credit and ball counters located on the left, and a logo on the right.



The only problem here is that the duplication from the Apple II version is carried to inexplicable extremes, i.e., the sound is generated solely through the computer's tiny internal speaker rather than via the TV set. On the Apple, there's no choice. With Atari, it's just senseless. The 400/800/1200 series is capable of generating four-part harmony. Apple II users are familiar with the audio drawbacks of their system and have probably corrected the problem by wiring the system into a stereo, for example. Atari owners, however, will be dumbfounded.

An unfortunate blotch on an otherwise beautiful program.

NITE FLYER

Computer Consultants of Iowa
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
24K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $24.95
Category: Flight Simulator
Number of Players: 1

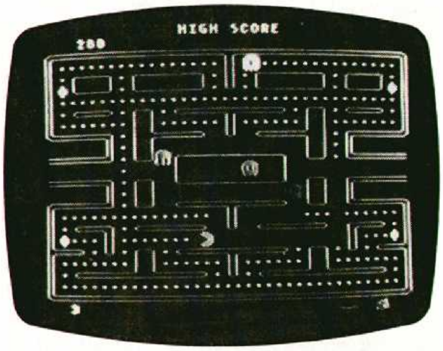
Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

While CCI's *Nite Flyer* will not exactly convince you that you're piloting a 747 into JFK International Airport, the spare graphics *do* convey the illusion of take-off and landing fairly well.

The sparce documentation is the greatest handicap in *Nite Flyer*, and it will take most players about 25 or so totalled jumbo jets before they get the "hang" of it. The other difficulty arises from joystick movement. Unlike classic flight simulators in which a plane ascends by pulling the joystick back and dives by pushing it forward, *Nite Flyer* reverses the tradition and takes considerable adjustment.

PAC-MAN

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements:
16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1-4 (alternating)



Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

The world-famous gobbler is here with all the familiar trappings, including variable bonus items, music, ghosts whose eyes tell the gamer where they're looking, and a perfect (albeit sideways for home TV sets) replica of the coin-op game.

The Pac-Man must devour all the dots in the maze before being gobbled by one of the four variously-colored ghosts. By devouring one of the quartet of "power pellets" located in each of the four corners of the playfield, the ghosts become vulnerable for a brief time and may be consumed by the game's protagonist.

PREPPIE!

Adventure International
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements:
32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Jumping Game
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 9

In this adorable variation on the *Freeway* and *Frogger* themes — the trick here is getting a character over an assortment of flora and fauna over roads and/or rivers. A four part harmonic version of "I Was Walking Through the Park One Day" plays in the background, while players maneuver their prep-protagonist across a golf green crawling with lawn mowers and similar grass-grooming devices. The object is to retrieve golf balls located variously on the playfield.

After crossing the green, a lake must be passed over as well. This is accomplished by jumping your character from rowboat to rowboat without tipping them over.

PROTECTOR II

Synapse Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $26.00
Category: Horizontally-scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Actually the *third* version of this classic *Defender*-style blast-up (the first being a rushed version on the defunct Crystalware label). All-consuming aliens are picking up poor Earthlings and dropping them into a volcano for sport. In your super-ship, Protector, play consists of rescuing the survivors and transporting them over the lava-spitting mountain to a "safe" city. Once all the people in the city under siege are either rescued or incinerated, the volcano erupts, putting a definite time limit on the final challenge — taking the living remnants of the planet through a defensive outpost, bristling with multi-directional cannons and all manner of dangers, before they can be safely dropped into a chute that transports them to safety.

REAR GUARD

Adventure International
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Written in BASIC, this SF-themed, horizontally-scrolling contest features an addictive play mechanic. Players move their ship up and down and dictate its speed. Other objects will zip onto the screen, and all must be eliminated, either by ramming (which costs the gamer's ship 10% of all its energy, as does hitting the bottom of the field) or by a well-aimed laser blast.

The computer tracks the number of ships which have escaped, the energy remaining and the hit-list, with the game ending when enough ships have slipped past you off the right side of the screen.

RICOCHET

Automated Simulations/Epyx
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $15.50
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9

Strikingly innovative program creates a grid comprised of lined-up dots and strategically-placed turnstile doors. Using a play mechanic that blends the thrill of pinball with the pride that accompanies first-rate strategic, chess-like thinking, the object is to turn as many of the doorways enroute to the "goal" (in the middle of the vertical axis) on your side of the playfield.

The computer plays a rough, challenging game as well.

SAMMY THE SEA SERPENT

PDI
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K Tape
Suggested Retail Price: $16.95
Category: Kideogame
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent (for children)
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

PDI uses the tape for both storing the game program and providing voice-over narration. Sammy is a baby sea serpent who becomes separated from his mother and must be helped by the player to find his way home. Sort of a precursor to "E.T."!

Block-like graphics won't knock your eyes out, but the simple games provide a marvelous learning experience for youngsters.

SOCCER

Gamma Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K Tape or Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 2-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Poor
Solitaire Rating: Not Applicable
Head-to-Head Rating: Fair
Overall Rating: 5

There are so very few sports simulations available for the Atari computer systems that almost any program is a welcome addition to a gamer's library. Almost.

Although superior to their earlier effort, *Hockey*, Gamma's *Soccer* is not exactly manna from heaven. Without a scrolling playfield, the action becomes cramped, with little room for sophisticated playmaking, passing and dribbling. Playaction is on the slow side, with goals seeming to drift into the net.

Playable by either two arcaders, each coaching one team, or up to four, although, again, the small field makes teamwork difficult.

SOCCER

Thorne-EMI
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1-4

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 9

Helping to bolster the gap in sports simulations for the Atari computers, the English-based Thorne-EMI software division has turned out a realistic soccer contest that can be played solitaire vs. the 400/800, two-players against the computer or by a pair of dual-captained squads. Full horizontal scrolling with trapezoidal, three-quarters perspective are utilized to render the graphic simulation.

Dribbling, goal kicks, throw-ins, and even straight-out shots on goals are all represented with the computer proving as tough a challenger as any human player the arcader is likely to take on.

SPACE GAMES

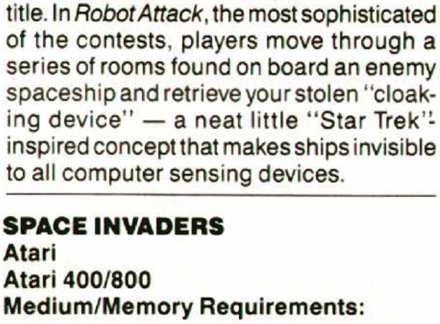
Educational Software
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Tape or Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $24.95
Category: Kideogame
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 7

This is a collection of basic videogame classics, presented in a format designed to both educate and entertain children. *Aliens* is an invasion game, and *Survive* is a maze game in which players attempt to lure aliens over mines and fulfill the requirements of the title. In *Robot Attack*, the most sophisticated of the contests, players move through a series of rooms found on board an enemy spaceship and retrieve your stolen "cloaking device" — a neat little "Star Trek"-inspired concept that makes ships invisible to all computer sensing devices.

SPACE INVADERS

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements:



16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1-4 (alternating turns)

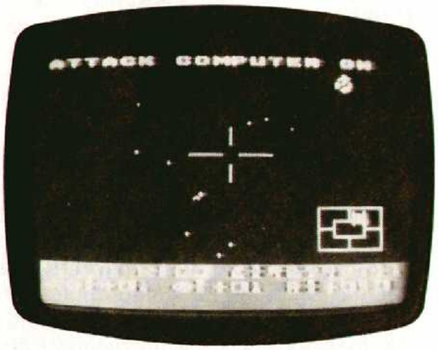
Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Rob Fulop's computer version of Taito's space invasion ground breaker features a rocket ship on the left side of the playfield, with columns of invaders emerging from each level before more traditional play resumes.

Accompanied by a drum-like thumping, invaders bite the dust and protective bunkers are shot away in now-familiar fashion. Players who last long enough to allow the alien's ship to land (it drops a notch with each successfully defended round) get a special treat.

STAR RAIDERS

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Science Fiction Strategy & Tactics
Number of Players: 1-3



Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Good
Overall Rating: 8

Mono-colored space-action which can be played solitaire, with the gamer using the joystick for tactical dog-fight sequences (rendered in the first person perspective) and computer keyboard to enter commands and designate positions on the alternately-appearing space grid. Front and rear views are offered, as well as all status reports on everything from the star date to the amount of energy remaining.

For multi-player action, assign one player the joystick-sharpshooter functions, a second the computer console, and sit back in the Captain's chair and bark orders.

STAR SENTRY

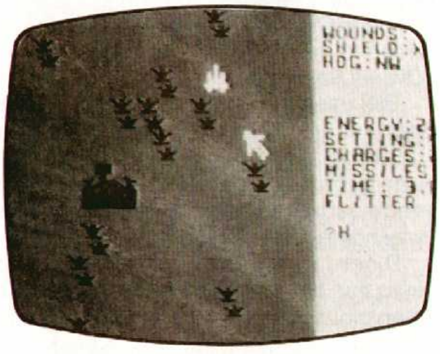
A.N.A.L.O.G.
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 24K Tape or disk
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Pending
Play-Action Rating: Pending
Solitaire Rating: Pending
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: Pending

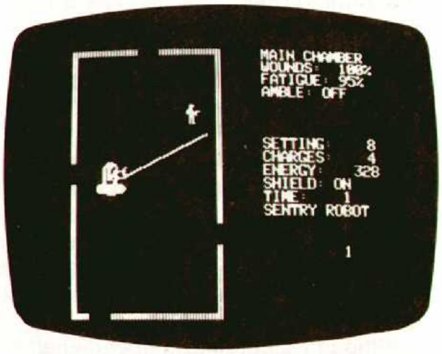
Stationed on the tiny outpost planet of Thule, the gamer must fight off invading alien "life orbs" who have designs on altering the planet's atmosphere to their own specifications. One of the less pleasant results of this interplanetary meddling is the melting of Thule's great frozen mountains.

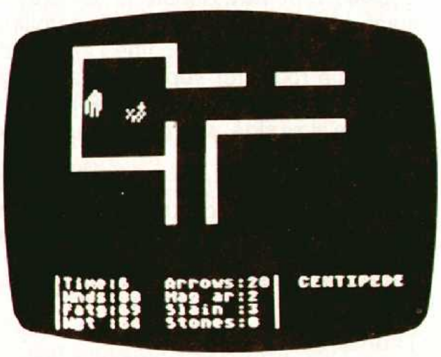
STAR WARRIOR

Epyx
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $31.10
Category: Action-Adventure
Number of Players: 1



Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7





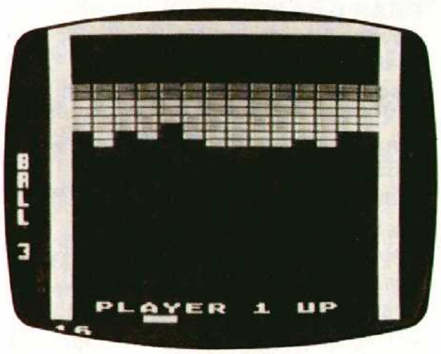
One of the real innovators in the field of graphic adventuring, Automated Simulations/Epyx introduced the concept with early Atari computer breakthroughs such as *Rescue at Rigel* and *Datestones of Ryn*, and virtually perfected it with *Star Warrior*.

Gamers portray an avenging Fury in a super-suit/exoskeleton, moving in leaps or taking flight over a variety of terrains, battling an assortment of alien ground forces and installations.

SUPER BREAKOUT

Atari
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $44.95
Category: Ball and Paddle
Number of Players: 1-8

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7



A compendium of variations based on the now classic ball and paddle/brick wall videogames. The classic original starts things out with players guiding the angle of a bouncing ball upward toward a stacked varicolored wall of blocks. Each time the ball makes contact with a brick, the brick is destroyed. The idea is to smash through the wall on either the left or right side of the playfield, punching the ball up into the space between the top of the wall and the top of the squared-off field. Angles of deflection are determined by the point on the paddle where the ball lands.

Variations include *Double* (two, vertically-stacked paddles), *Cavity* (where two bonus balls are trapped in hollowed-out segments of the brick wall) and the ultimate test, *Super Breakout*, where gamers must deal with a series of smaller walls scrolling inexorably downscreen, almost reaching the paddle before disappearing.

THRESHOLD

On-Line
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent

Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

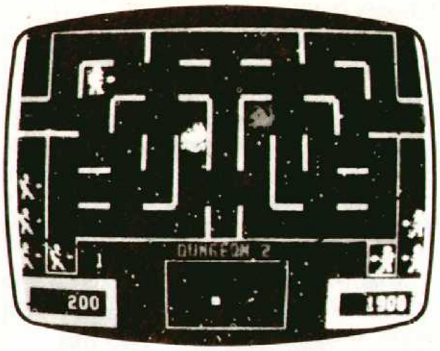
Modeled on Sega's popular coin-op, *Astro Blaster*, On-Line's multi-scenario *Threshold* is a high-res invasion game with a special "warp drive" feature for use once per round. By pulling the joystick back toward them, gamers can thereby slow down the action to a crawl and pick off the remaining enemy attackers.

On the right side of the field there's a gauge determining how hot the gamer's laser is becoming; overheating costs 15 seconds of "down time". A bonus ship appears to refuel the player's craft every four racks, before a whole new assortment of challenges appear.

THE WIZARD OF WOR

Rocklan
Atari 400/800
Medium/Memory Requirements: 16K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Maze Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 9



Using a radar screen located at the base of the playfield, the arcader moves a "worrior" through a labyrinthian maze full of dragons and beasties. Clear the maze and you'll meet the Wizard's apprentice — and perhaps even the Wizard himself!

With each successive round, more and more of the maze is eliminated, until the gamer eventually reaches an open arena known as the "Pit", the most lethal piece of terrain in the game.

TUMBLE BUGS

Datasoft
Atari Computers
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K Disk
Suggested Retail Price: $25.00
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Originally dubbed *Dung Beetles*, *Tumble Bugs* makes an interesting variant on the maze-chase genre. The game begins with a lethal beetle staring out at the player, daring him or her to begin. The computer then draws a large maze, which the player must memorize as game movement is conducted only in small, magnified portions of the master-maze.

IBM PERSONAL COMPUTER

DEADLINE

Infocom
IBM-PC
Medium/Memory Requirements: 48K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $49.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

Time is of the essence in more ways than one as the player takes the role of a police detective who must solve a murder at the mansion within a single day. Not only is there an obvious deadline (nightfall), but since the non-player characters act independently of (and simultaneously with) the player's activities, it is quite possible to arrive at the right place *after* something crucial has taken place there.

Although this is a text adventure, Infocom has included numerous player aids, such as actual physical evidence, that give the proceedings a substance and solidity that really helps the arcading detective get into the swing of things.

WARP FACTOR

Strategic Simulations
IBM PC
Medium/Memory Requirements: 64K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Excellent
Overall Rating: 8

This is the IBM Personal Computer edition of a space-war simulation that has previously proven so popular for SSI as an Apple II title. The would-be Napoleon of the future can battle either another human player or the computer in one of several different scenarios. These include such things as an attack against a star base and a chase with a Reman ship, capable of invisibility as the quarry.

ZORK I

Infocom
IBM-PC
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Leibling and Blank have jointly created the annointed successor to the original *Adventure* program that once kept mainframe operators working late several nights a week. Among its advantages are the ability to issue multiple commands and communicate your instructions in complete sentences instead of using two-word shorthand.

This, the first part of an adventure game trilogy, introduces the vast hidden empire to players.

ZORK II

Infocom
IBM-PC
Medium/Memory Requirements: 32K disk
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The second disk of this three-part electronic epic brings the now seasoned (hopefully) adventurer into contention with the Wizard of Frobuzz. Let your imagination run riot as you enter your character's instructions using full sentences in this prose quest game.

VIC-20

ADVENTURE LAND

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

One of the Scott Adams *Adventure* Games, this one opens with the player in the midst of a deep forest. The outdoor adventure ranges through settings from a quicksand bog to a bottomless pit (complete with billboard, advertising the adventure series!) Players can collect items like a blue ox and jeweled fruit. On the way, creatures like dragons and magic words liven up the action.

AGGRESSOR

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat/Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Very Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A quick hand and eye coupled with even quicker reflexes and a joystick are required to play *Aggressor*, a fast-paced, action-packed combat/shoot-out. Rather than being the hunted, the player is the hunter, and pilots a marauder ship on it's seek-and-destroy mission against the enemy Zaurian space ships seeking to liberate the Stellarium fuel dumps. The gamer must negotiate myriad obstacles such as space mines, enemy phaser blasts that "lock" on their targets, and a variety of enemy ships, each having their own special characteristics.

Aggressor has nine play-levels, and each is difficult in it's own right. A "tight" joystick, razor-sharp reflexes and diligent concentration are all a must to achieve high scores at any play-level of *Aggressor*.

ANTIMATTER SPLATTER!

Standard 5K VIC-20
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Very Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The task of the gamer is to protect Earth's population from the antimatter pods which are being dropped through the atmosphere from the Mother Alien found at the top of the playfield. The only way to destroy an antimatter pod is with your splatter cannon, but when you miss, you blow away a section of the atmosphere, creating another entry hole for the antimatter pods to drop-in through. Each time an antimatter pod hits the Earth, a segment of the population (represented by little people at the bottom of the screen) is destroyed.

Control is achieved through the keyboard or a joystick — either works well, but a "tight" joystick is best, since the gamer will have to move quickly as the invasion picks up momentum, which it does quickly. Game's end is brought about either by the splatter the cannon makes upon being hit by antimatter pods, or the entire population of the planet being annihilated, whichever comes first. This is one of those "no win" invasion games, since the Mother Alien never runs out of antimatter pods, but the Earth soon runs out of people. Game restart is initiated by depressing the space bar on the keyboard. Play-action is really hairy, but unfortunately, high score per session is not constantly displayed, so keep notes of scores for future reference during the session.

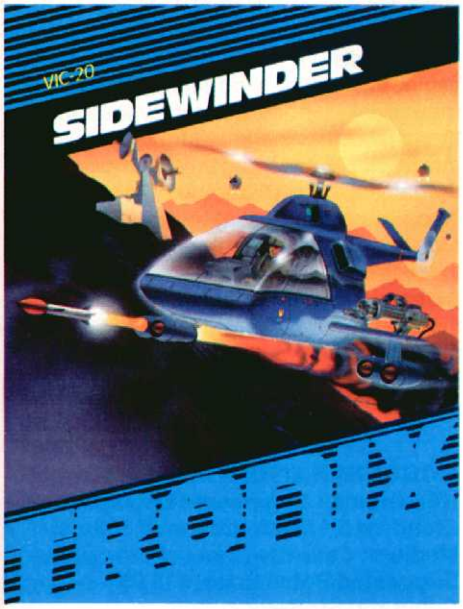
ASTRO PATROL
RUDE GIRL/SECRET FILE

Standard 5K VIC-20
Astral Image
Suggested Retail Price: $33.86
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Poor
Play-Action Rating: Poor
Solitaire Rating: Poor
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 1

This cassette contains three programs: *Astro Patrol*, which is a very poor and unchallenging space-war shoot-out; *Rude Girl*, a betting game of the coin-flip type, in which you wager on the spastic actions of the poorly-animated rude girl, more ac-

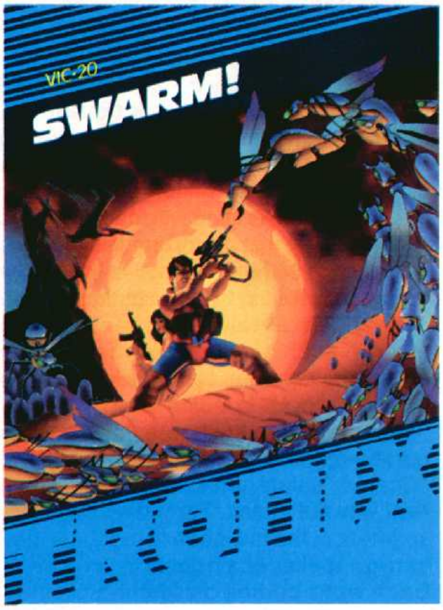
THE ULTIMATE IN FAST ACTION FOR YOUR VIC-20.



Dive Into a Fearsome Fight!

Grab your gloves, survival pack and headgear! Your Sidewinder commandos are whooshing off into the most frenzied fight in the far side of the galaxy! You've got to out-maneuver deadly Battle pods, dodge destructive Stalker bombs and go head-to-head with alien Oblitojets. . . all at speeds you wouldn't imagine possible!

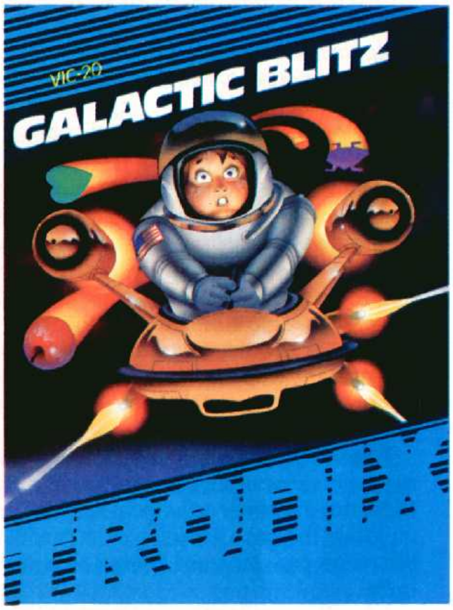
Suggested Retail Price $29.95



Blast An Insect Invasion!

Dive into the most awesome all-out battle ever! You'll be attacked from all directions by a barrage of deadly android wasps and alien creatures like you've never encountered before! Any contact means instant destruction! If it's not the fastest game you've ever played, you're from another planet.

Suggested Retail Price $29.95



Attack Crazy Aliens!

Fall back into the far fields of the galaxy! That bumbling formation coming at you is the crazy Galactic Blitz. These aliens have 15 different play patterns. And each time you take one out of the game they come back mad as ever! So go for the galactic score full speed ahead! If you're merely a spectator, find another sport.

Suggested Retail Price $24.95

Dealer inquiries invited. Tronix games are available at your local store, or direct from us. Send a check or money order to Tronix Publishing, Inc., 701 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood, CA 90301.

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curately called "crude" girl; and *Secret File* which isn't a game but an encoding utility to write "secret messages". The gamer can turn this cassette into a guessing game by trying to answer why this crude offering was ever created in the first place. You can surely live without this one.

BLUE MEANIES FROM OUTER SPACE

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95 (as part of 6-pack)
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Rectangular-shaped Blue Meanies are assaulting the player's starbase, trying to destroy its power cells. The defense arsenal consists of two sets of three lasers, facing each other on opposite sides of the base's sidewalls. Using the lasers eats up energy, as does losing an incoming supply ship. The player starts with 1,000 energy units; if the supply ship makes it through, it adds 500 units.

The Meanies can take out lasers and make holes in the starbase in their attempt to destroy the power cells, located under the middle of the base. Repair robots can fill in the holes, but each use takes 100 energy units.

After 20 Meanies bite the dust, Meaner Meanies take over the invasion, eating up even more of the player's energy.

BOMBS AWAY

Standard 5K VIC-20
Computermat
Suggested Retail Price: $18.95
Category: Catch
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

The mad bomber is at it again! The gamer gets three buckets to catch the bombs in, which fall from the top of the screen. An extra bucket is awarded at the score of 500 points, and an additional bucket for every 1,000 points thereafter.

The graphics are rather stark, and the sound effects (consisting of monotonous musical notes) could be improved quite a bit, but the game's biggest drawback is the snail-pace at which the bombs are dropped at the beginning. After a couple of hundred points, however, the speed increases, and continues to do so as long as the score continues to rise. Just about when you think you've got it down to a science, the bucket gets smaller, and by now the bombs are dropping like rain from the skies. Novel feature is the bomber; his usual frown turns to a smile each time you miss one with the bucket.

BUG BLASTER

Standard 5K VIC-20
Computermat
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Invasion/Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

A distant cousin to *Centipede*, *Bug Blaster* offers an appealing and colorful playfield, great sound effects and a continuing challenge. Play is handled through either the keyboard or joystick, the latter being better suited to the quick maneuvering and firing often required to attain high scores.

The playfield is filled with cacti, and it is through these that the millipede descends from the top of the screen while the gamer tries to blow it away from the bottom. Three gunners are alloted, and various bonus targets, such as a bumblebee buzzing across the top of the screen, aid in achieving high scores.

When the gamer successfully cancels out all segments of the millipede, a musical *"Charge!"* salute heralds the coming of the next wave of attack. Permitting even one segment of the millipede to reach the bottom row spells certain death to the gunner. Each wave comes on faster and more furiously than the last, with more cactus plants to shunt the gunner and aid the insect.

Bug Blaster offers the lure of achieving ever-higher scores as the gamer's skill and familiarity with it increase. It's a terrific game that shows what a terrific gaming machine the VIC-20 Computer can be with the right software to drive it, and *Bug Blaster* is a "blast" on the VIC!

CAR CHASE

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95 (as part of six-pack)
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

This game features a maze-like track arranged in four concentric rectangles. Points are scored by passing a blue car over the dots in each lane. However, a white car, moving in the opposite direction, is determined to force a collision.

Three crashes and the game is over. Hold out for two rounds and the white car begins to change some of the dots to bonus diamonds — but the player has to be quick to drive the blue car over the gems, since whitey will pick them up the next time he rolls by.

CASINO-STYLE BLACKJACK

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95 (as part of six-pack)
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This video version of the traditional casino works like the original — the player tries to make his card point total closer to 21 than that of the dealer, without going over that figure. After seeing the first two cards, the gamer can be hit (get another card), stay (keep the cards drawn), double (get one more card and double the bet), split (split the two cards, if they're of identical rank, into two hands), or give up (immediately lose half the bet). The opening stake is $1,000, and the player can bet as he chooses.

One interesting touch is that the computer uses the name(s) of the player(s).

CONCENTRATION

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $15.95
Category: Strategy
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Very Good
Play-Action Rating: Very Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Very Good
Overall Rating: 7

Closely resembling the old television game show of the same name, *Concentration* utilizes a joystick and provides the player(s) with a match-board of 48 rectangles. The objective of the game is to match the symbol under one rectangle with its twin located somewhere else on the board. To reveal the symbol, the player hits the fire button on the joystick, and movement to different symbol locations is also done via the stick. A correct match credits the player who accomplished it, and gives him an extra turn. Two-player action requires passing the joystick back and forth according to whose turn it is.

The initial game after loading is always the same play-board, but subsequent games change the symbol locations, making it incredibly difficult to memorize all the match locations of each board. HES provides instructions at the beginning of the first game, but they are bypassed for succeeding games during the same play session. The game is a great test of memory, though it's a bit boring when playing solitaire.

DAM BOMBER

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $15.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

Your joystick controls your jet in *Dam Bomber*, and you have a total of four planes to bomb the dam. But be careful, there's a cannon on top of the dam firing away at your plane. The gamer can swoop down or soar upwards to evade the cannon blasts, and bombs are launched from the jet via the fire button. Hits on the dam will increment the score 10 points, but only if the bomb takes out two bricks. Whenever the dam is completely bombed, a new playscreen appears, and the process will begin all over. Timing and maneuvering are the secrets to achieving high scores in *Dam Bomber*, and it's a good game for the younger arcaders, since the "hot shots" might not find enough challenge here to hold their interest.

DEFENDER ON TRI

5K VIC-20 + 3K RAM Expander
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Medium: Cassette
Category: Timed Obstacle Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The objective of *Defender on Tri* is to fly your spaceship through an alien complex full of booby traps, blockades and obstacles, rescue the "scientist", pick up as much alien treasure as you can and return to the base to drop off the scientist and plunder, then dock your ship in its pod. The full-term game goes through four playfields, each different, while making stops along the way to refuel. At the start of the game, the clock starts at 2000 and continues to count down while the gamer goes through the rigorous four-maze complex on his mission. Collision with any object in the maze other than the scientist or treasures results in the destruction of your ship, and thus terminates the game. The game can be played with either keyboard or joystick, but the keyboard makes it almost impossible to achieve high scores. The joystick's the way to go, since you'll find negotiating the complex mazes much more efficient. The stick's fire button activates your deflector shields, which will protect you against collision explosions, as long as your fuel holds out. Each activation of the shields uses 50 fuel units, and the maximum supply you can carry at any one time is 999 units. There are, however, ample refueling depots in each of the four mazes.

If the gamer successfully completes his mission through the four mazes, the game restarts, but this time the clock is moving faster and the obstacles retract for shorter periods of time, thus increasing the difficulty of play each time through. Terrific sound effects, excellent graphics, increasing challenge levels as skill increases, and great documentation make this one a must for VIC-20 owners with an extra 3K expander.

DRAW POKER

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

In this version of the card game, the player can bet up to nine coins on five cards drawn. The keyboard is used to hold or discard, or to double. An attractive, but overlong introduction leads into yet another intro. A chart of the odds on various hands then tops the cards on the actual playfield. The five cards are turned over one by one, and the player indicates whether each card should be held or discarded.

ESCAPE

Standard 5K VIC-20
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Medium: Cassette
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

In *Escape*, the VIC-20 generates a maze consisting of myriad doorways and corridors, and places you somewhere inside (your position is indicated by a "Y" in the maze). This overhead view of the maze only stays on the screen for a short time before it changes to a ground-level view. The objective, of course, is to find your way out. The major drawback of the game is that you must use the keyboard instead of a joystick or a directional box, which would greatly enhance the play-action. To refresh the gamer's memory as to where he is in the maze, hitting the "C" (for cheat) key, will bring up the overhead view for a few seconds. Directional control is accomplished with the N for north, S for south, E for east and W for west keys. The game ends when escape is affected through the exit doorways. Depressing the space bar begins a new game. The randomly-generated maze and initial player's starting position add lots of variety to the game, but keyboard play is somewhat cumbersome. Joystick would have raised overall rating to a 9 instead of a 7, but it's still a good maze game. The "cheat" feature is a blessing; without it, the gamer might wander around for days before finding the exit door!

EXTERMINATOR

Standard 5K VIC-20
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Medium: Cassette
Category: Invasion/Shoot-Out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Very Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Similar to *Centipede*, this game offers an endless barrage of marauding insects crawling down from the top of the screen towards the exterminator (at the bottom) while he fires away at them, as well as occasional falling targets. While all of this is going on, the gamer has to be wary of the green spider that comes across the bottom portion of the screen in search of a meal, and his favorite food is — you guessed it — the exterminator. The spider can be killed, but he takes a lot of dieing to snuff. The downward-advancing insects become carnivors if allowed to reach the bottom row, so watch out!

After successfully trashing all the bugs, the screen colors change before the next wave of attack begins, and this really adds to the confusion until you adjust to the new coloration. Player is allowed three exterminators before a game is over. Difficulty increases as existing cover is shot away, thus making insects' descent more rapid. Constant display of high score per session, novel "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" musical intro, and fast-fire action, make this one well worth having!

GORF

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The Commodore version of the Midway arcade game takes the player through four waves of attack. *Astro Battles* is related to *Space Invaders*, with three levels of attackers worth 60, 80 and 100 points, respectively, 200 points available for hitting two types of saucers and 250 for destroying the Gorf.

Get past that, and the Laser Attack begins. Two groups of attackers are after you. each spearheaded by a laser ship.

Three attack ships and a Gorf round out each force — these can destroy you by crashing into your fighter, but only the laser ship fires from a distance. All of the attackers keep coming until you wipe them out.

Kill them off, and Space Warp begins. The space warp fighters come out in a spiral formation, launching homing torpedoes from a central site. A Gorf also gets into the act. All these attackers are worth 100 points.

The final battle wave is against the flagship. It sends out saucers worth 200 points, and is protected by a force field the player must blast away, bit by bit. Hitting the flagship, worth 50 points, creates a chunk of debris that can wipe out a fighter, or be shot down for 100 points. The flagship can only be destroyed by exploding the power reactor.

GRIDRUNNER

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion/Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Outstanding
Play-Action Rating: Outstanding
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 10

"The Grid" is Earth's orbiting solar power station, and the gamer has to protect it from the enemy Droids, a species of space maggot. To accomplish this, a combat ship, the "Gridrunner", is placed at the gamer's disposal, as well as four spare ships, which are controlled through the joystick. The objective is to eliminate the Droids as they accumulate on the Grid, where they multiply and attack the Gridrunner, and eventually, the Earth. A successful mission (clearing the Grid of all Droids) is rewarded with an extra ship, and the play level increases to the next hardest increment. High score per session is constantly displayed.

Gridrunner is a truly outstanding cartridge; absolute arcade quality all the way through. Sound, sight, action and challenge are all top notch, and the documentation is superb. Bravo, HES!

JUPITER LANDING

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The player tries to repeatedly land his spaceship on one of three landing sites of varying difficulty before running out of fuel. The keyboard guides the vessel to the right or left, and produces three levels of thrust to control the landing — but be careful, too much thrust can send your craft out of the sky.

As the vessel approaches the landing site, the screen shifts to a close-up view. The softer the landing, the more points earned. A meter-per-second gauge tells you how you're doing. Too hard a landing, and even if it's successful, your spaceshift will be destroyed.

KRAZY KONG

Standard 5K VIC-20
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Medium: Cassette
Category: Climbing
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Very Good
Play-Action Rating: Very Good
Solitaire Rating: Very Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Once again, we have the old "big monkey gone bonkers" scenario: three lovelies stashed away at the top of the stairs and a hero attempting the rescue while the gorilla goes ape throwing barrels down the stairs. (Rumor has it that this ape is really "Bonzo", now fully grown and not quite right in the head since his show-biz career fizzled when Ronald Reagan went into politics!)

The game can be played from the keyboard, but better scores result from using a joystick or directional box. The object, as usual, is to get the hero up the stairs by jumping the barrels to rescue the three ladies, one at a time. Four options are offered: 1) fewer barrels and longer jumps; 2) fewer barrels and shorter jumps; 3) more barrels and longer jumps; 4) more barrels and shorter jumps. The levels are selected using the VIC's f1, f3, f5 or f7 keys, respectively. Each succeeding staircase is tougher after a successful rescue.

Game ends when hero gets a keg in the head, he's out of energy, jumps onto Bonzo (bad thing to do with any ape), hits a wall, or rescues all three ladies. If the gamer wants a replay, hit the space bar quickly at the game's end or listen to the carnival music played at the beginning. The music's a novel idea, adds a bit to the atmosphere of the game, but really gets to be a pain in the ear after a few times. The option to bypass the music on a replay is a great idea. Excuse the pun, but the game is a barrel of fun on all four play levels!

LASER BLITZ

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

The gamer is the pilot of a UFO that has to blast away the enemy fighters sauntering across the bottom of the screen. Either keyboard or joystick may be used, and either works well. The enemy fighters will detect and blast your UFO if you don't keep moving, and three hits by the enemy constitute a game. Every shot the UFO takes drains its energy supply, and makes it lose altitude. The laser will also heat up and be inoperative for a number of seconds, leaving the gamer defenseless and vulnerable during this period. If the gamer lets the UFO drop too low, the enemy ships will cause radio interference with it, activating it's self-destruct mechanism. Coordination and time are crucial here, and a free UFO is awarded at 5,000 points. Graphics and animation are very good, but the sound could be better.

MAZE OF MIKOR

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Maze/Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Very Good
Solitaire Rating: Very Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

The gamer is given three men, and their quest is for the gold of Mikor, the warlock. Directional control is achieved through the joystick, as is firing the rifle your hero is carrying. There are demons in the maze, and although they're not very bright, they can and will kill your hero. The objective is to scaff up the gold, zap the demons, and go on to the next quest. Experience is measured by the amount of gold confiscated and the number of demons killed. Losing all three of your adventurers terminates the game.

Along the way, the gamer may find such goodies as extra dynamite (detonated by hitting the "D" key on the keyboard) which comes in short-and long-fuse varieties, magic rings, potions, energy packs for you and your rifle, and even extra lives for the adventurers. The demons have a few tricks up their sleeves, also, such as laying blockades (invisible, sometimes), which you must blast away to pass through. The gold is represented by yellow dots, and the player must never blast the gold or be condemned by the warlock's curse to eternity in the maze!

MOLE ATTACK

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good

Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Nine nasty little moles — three rows, each three deep — keep popping up out of their burrows. The player has just sixty seconds to bop as many as possible with his trusty hammer. The lower the mole is when the player strikes, the more points you score. But bopping as soon as you glimpse something moving from the burrow can be a real mistake — if it's the mole's buns, which bear a striking resemblance to his head, you'll lose points — the further down the mole, the more points deducted.

Either the joystick or the keyboard can be used to bop the creatures, which constantly change color and appear more quickly as time runs out. Scoring 150 points earns extra time to bring your little hammer down upon their heads.

OMEGA RACE

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Combat
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

In this home version of Midway's arcade game, the player's warrior must evade and destroy three kinds of enemy ships — droid, worth 1,000 points, command, worth 1,500 and death, worth 2,500 — and two types of mines — photons, worth 350 points and vapor, worth 500.

The ship is propelled by rocket thrust, and rotated clockwise or counterclockwise for aiming. The ship will bounce off the rectangular forcefield protecting the planet below as well as the edges of the screen. Killing off the entire force earns 5,000 bonus points and starts a new, more difficult screen.

The game can be played with the keyboard, joystick or paddles and the player has eight color choices for both the background and the ships and mines. There's also an option of three or five warrior ships.

PAK BOMBER

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $15.95
Category: Catch
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 6

Once again, we have the old "catch-the-bomb-in-the-basket trick". The gamer is given three baskets in which he is supposed to catch the bombs released at the top of the screen. Either a joystick or the keyboard may be used for playing, but the keyboard works best, since most joysticks aren't "tight" enough, and the gamer must use the VIC's "f1" key to start the next round. Instructions are given at the end of the initial game load and are bypassed on subsequent plays per session.

There is an error somewhere in the game's program that doesn't affect play action, but it *is* annoying; at game's end, high score and your score for the last game are both displayed. Unfortunately, they both always reflect the score of the game just completed, rather than the high score per session, so if you're into keeping track of your high score, you'll have to resort to a pencil and paper. Aside from this flaw, *Pak Bomber* is a good game that requires good hand-eye coordination and a sense of timing. The option to play again or terminate the program is given at the game's end, along with a taunt to quitters. To restart after quitting (if the on-screen taunt gets to you), simply type in "cont" and a return.

RADAR RATRACE

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

A fanfare of "Three Blind Mice" introduces the player's blue rat, which must race through a maze to devour 10 pieces of cheese before time runs out. The maze is always the same, but the cheese bits shift location with each game.

The blue rat is pursued by three red rats, while also avoiding black cats who won't bother to chase him but will eat him if he runs into them. The player has a couple of advantages, though: a radar screen, showing the entire maze and the whereabouts of the cheese bits and the rats; and the ability to produce "magic stars" which confuse his followers.

The first cheese eaten is worth 100 points; the value of each additional one increases by 100, and some are worth double. At 20,000 points, the player earns an extra rat. If time runs out before all 10 cheeses are eaten — eek! You're doomed.

RIVER RESCUE

Thorn-EMI Video
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1-2

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

The player has to guide his boat upriver, dodging or shooting objects floating in the water, in order to rescue three lost explorers. When the boat nears each adventurer, it picks up his weak SOS. The vessel must safely dock at a jetty to take each one aboard.

The river narrows and widens as it meanders, and the player must also avoid hitting the banks. The joystick or keyboard can be used to control direction and speed — the faster you go, the higher your score. Normal games give the player three boats, extended games, six. If your ship is destroyed after picking up an explorer, he remains on board until the game ends. On a normal game, 7,000 points earns an extra boat.

The player earns points for speed, shooting obstacles — 30 for crocodiles and anacondas, 50 for dugout canoes — and saving explorers (500 each). After saving all the explorers, the boat must continue to a final jetty, where a safe docking scores 1,500 bonus points.

ROAD RACE

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Driving
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Fair
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 4

In this night-time driving game, the player must travel as far as possible before running out of fuel. Looking out over the dashboard, where indicators show speed, fuel, motor heat and distance travelled, the player guides the front end of the car between traditional block-shaped road markers. At the top of the screen, time counts down from the 100-second limit, and the best time for the current series of games is recorded.

The player earns extra driving time for going 6 KM or more. The player must start the car, steer, accelerate, and, most interesting, shift gears, all using the keyboard. The dangers are crashing into the road markers and overheating the engine.

ROBOT PANIC

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Invasion/Scrolling Shoot-out
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Very Good
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Through the joystick, the gamer controls a drone robot used to battle swarms of Grydlocks. The Grydlocks each have different characteristics, and these must be mastered to achieve high scores in *Robot Panic*. Different point values are assigned to each variety of Grydlock, and each has its own attack pattern and wave formation. There are nine waves of assorted Grydlocks per level, and 20 levels of play. The gamer is supplied with a laser cannon and a limited supply of impenetrable shields. The shields can only be activated by depressing the spacebar on the keyboard, and they use a tremendous amount of energy while only affording about four seconds of protection. The game can also be played through the keyboard, and this may be the better way to go if you use the shields alot, since this is *too* hairy a game to be played with both joystick and spacebar simultaneously.

Robot Panic is a heavy-duty game that offers great graphics and sound, excellent play-action and a continuing challenge. The documentation, as usual for HES, is truly superb and explains the game's objectives, characteristics of the various Grydlocks and their point values, and many helpful strategy suggestions. *Robot Panic* is a welcome addition to any VIC-20 owners game library!

SARGON II CHESS

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Classic Strategy
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Outstanding
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Commodore's version of the *Sargon II* chess program offers seven levels of play, from 0, where the computer responds immediately, to 6, where it averages four hours. The last five moves are recorded in the move window, and the screen tells you when the machine is "thinking" which moves it is considering, and how many moves it's looking ahead.

Need help? On all levels except 0, Sargon will suggest a usable move. Player can use either the keyboard, along with standard algebraic chess notation, or the joystick. There's a choice of more than 50 color combinations for the board. Sargon bleeps to tell the player it has finished thinking and is moving, and also bleeps if the player makes an illegal move. The player can choose to be either black or white, and has the option to set up the board to practice strategies.

SKIER

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Sports
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Very Good
Play-Action Rating: Very Good
Solitaire Rating: Very Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

Three play levels are offered in *Skier*: 1-Novice, 2-Pro, and 3-Expert. A joystick is required, and the length of the course varies with the play-level selected. The gamer is given three men, and has to avoid moguls, ice patches and trees to complete the downhill course. A 500-point bonus is awarded for successful completion of the entire course, with points being awarded for every flag hit or knocked down.

Instructions are included on the cassette itself, so gamers won't have to worry about losing them. The program gives you a choice of displaying instructions or bypassing them when you've become familiar with the game. A novel feature is the ambulance which comes out onto the ski course to pick up an injured skier when he hits a tree. Level 1 is great for beginners and children, 2 for the more advanced gamer, and 3 for the "expert" skiers out there with a VIC-20 and joystick.

SLITHER & SUPER SLITHER

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
(as part of 6-pack)
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Average
Play-Action Rating: Average
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

Player has one minute to capture points by steering a "worm" into boxes that appear and disappear on the screen. Each box has its point value marked in the center, and either keyboard or joysticks can be used.

In *Slither*, the boxes appear one at a time, and the worm gets an additional segment for its tail each time it hits a box. *Super Slither* differs in that up to three boxes can appear at any time, and the worm's tail grows another segment for each point scored.

The game ends if the worm hits the edge of the board or runs into itself.

SNAKMAN

Standard 5K VIC-20
Microdigital
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Snakman is Microdigital's answer to *Pac-Man*. Although the game can be played either by keyboard or joystick, the latter is preferred. The objective is to accumulate the maximum number of points by capturing all of the green tokens, each worth 10 points, and each of the four red tokens at 50 points apiece. Once a red token has been captured, the four colored gremlins turn white and are vulnerable to capture during this period, which lasts for approximately six seconds. A beep indicates the end of their vulnerability after five seconds to warn the gamer that the Snakman will once again become the hunted rather than the hunter. During the gremlins' vulnerability period, point value increases for each captured. An area in the center of the maze called the "jail" is where the new gremlins emerge from, each time one is captured. By playing it close to the "jail", the gamer has the best opportunity to make the most captures and really rack up points.

Special bonus tokens appear in a horseshoe section at the top of the maze, and their varying values appear on the bottom left of the screen under the maze. The number of remaining spare Snakmen is shown in a box within the game playfield. Once all of the green and red tokens are captured, a renewed playfield appears, and the gamer gets to do it all again *ad infinitum* until he loses all of his spare Snakmen through capture by the gremlins. Highest score per gaming session is always displayed on the screen and a new game is initiated by hitting either the "f1" key on the VIC or the "fire button" on the joystick.

The sound and graphics are as close to true arcade-quality as you'll get on a conventional color TV, and if you're using a direct color video monitor, it's like having the "real thing", without having to drop quarters in to beat your previous high score. The documentation supplied with the cassette is also superb, and *Snakman* should be a permanent edition of every VIC-20 gamer's library because of its perennial appeal.

SUPERSLOT

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Gambling
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

In this version of the slot machine game, the player is given 80 coins, of which he can bet up to five at a time, winning from two to 3,000 coins. Either the keyboard or the joystick can be used to bet and pull the lever, setting the game in motion, as well as to call up an explanation of the winning combinations.

Each of the three rows stop individually, and the machine plays an optimistic "We're in the Money" as the last row appears — regardless of the ultimate outcome. A cute touch is that as the lever is pulled, a small character on the right actually performs the same action.

SYNTHESOUND

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge

Suggested Retail Price: $59.95
Category: Miscellaneous
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Synthesound is not a game at all. It is a music synthesizer cartridge that will turn your 5K VIC-20 into a full-blown music synthesis and sound-effects machine. It features 12 controls, a two-octave fast-attack keyboard, three voices, a four-1/2-octave range, high-res display of the control settings and keyboard fingering, a four-voice sequencer for repeating melodies, sound effects or drum beats, and a load of other features.

Even though it's not a game cartridge, the gamer will have hours of fun playing with it. The excellent documentation manual supplied with it is extremely "user-friendly" and takes the player through all of *Synthesound's* features in plain English, with more technical jargon and operational explanations at the end. Best of all, you don't have to know anything about music or programming to create songs or effects. Virtually any sound in the world can be synthesized with this cartridge and your VIC, and it opens up a whole new world of creative and recreational possibilities to the gamer.

TANK TRAP

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Strategy
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Excellent
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 9

Tank Trap has four play levels and utilizes a joystick. The game's objective is to trap a tank by laying down pylon blockades, which are controlled by the fire button. Level 1 pits the gamer against the tank solely, Level 2 introduces civilians which must be protected in addition to trapping the tank, Levels 3 & 4 have civilians and "weak" pylon blockades which may or may not stop the tank. Also, Level 4 has no border on the playfield.

The game is amusing, challenging and frustrating all at the same time, since civilian placement and tank movement is randomly generated by the computer. The deflection of the tank off a blockade is unpredictable, and often results in the gamer being run-over by it, thus terminating the game. Comments on your playing ability are given, and are very amusing. Sound effects are really good, also, and start of a new game and play-level is fast and efficient.

Tank Trap is a fun game for the whole family, and will provide many hours of challenging and fun play-action for VIC-20 owners.

TANK WARS

HES (Human Engineered Software)
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cassette
Suggested Retail Price: $17.95
Category: Target
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Fair
Solitaire Rating: Fair
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 5

In *Tank Wars*, the gamer is the driver of the white tank, while the computer drives the enemy black tank. There are obstacles on the playfield, such as trees, mines and lakes, and the objective is to blast the enemy tank before it blasts you. The enemy is very evasive, however, mimicking the moves of the player's tank. The VIC-20 displays the current scores of both the player's tank and that of the enemy computer. The game is over when five tanks of either side are blasted. Quitting the game is done by hitting the "Q" key or restarting a new game by hitting the "S" on the keyboard.

Tank Wars is a cute game, and not overly demanding of the player's skill. Good game for children and non-expert gamers.

THE COUNT

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $39.95
Category: Adventure
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Not Applicable
Play-Action Rating: Not Applicable
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

One of the Scott Adams *Adventure* Games for the VIC-20, this one starts out with the player awakening in a large brass bed one late afternoon. The text adventure takes place in a Transylvanian castle, with hallway, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen all appropriately furnished. The player can also venture outside the castle. The object is to find and destroy the vampire; failure is a fate likely to turn anyone pale.

THE CRICKETT

Standard 5K VIC-20
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $24.95
Category: Tomed Obstacle Maze
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Very Good
Solitaire Rating: Very Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

As in *Frogger*, the objective is to get Cherp the Crickett across the highway, over the stone wall (often patrolled by a hungry frog), and across the river by jumping on logs, leaves, turtles and other assorted debris. Timing is the main secret in achieving high scores, as well as maintaining a calm and cool head.

Bonus time is awarded for completion of the first crossing under the time limit, and additional crickets are supplied to continue the game and keep racking up points until you lose one. Although nowhere near what you would call state-of-the-art as far as VIC-20 games go, it is an interesting and challenging game that can easily keep you going for hours with the old "just one more time" attitude you'll soon adopt after a few rounds.

3-D MAN

5K VIC-20 + 3K RAM Expander
Nufekop
Suggested Retail Price: $19.95
Category: Maze-Chase
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Good
Play-Action Rating: Good
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 7

This is more-or-less a version of *Pac-Man* but from *his* point of view. A radar screen-inset displays your position, the position of the dots, and that of the monsters within the maze. The objectives of the game are to eat all the dots in the maze and not get eaten.

Although somewhat confusing and disorientating at first, the gamer will quickly develop the necessary skills within a few games and then really start to cook. A joystick is an absolute must for this game, and by watching the radar screen, you can devour the dots and avoid the monsters — most of the time! When an encounter with a monster is imminent, quick reversal of directions via the stick will get you out of trouble temporarily. Although it's a good game, the extra 3K of RAM required to play it leads you to expect more than the game provides.

VIC AVENGER

Commodore
Standard 5K Commodore VIC-20
Medium: Cartridge
Suggested Retail Price: $29.95
Category: Invasion
Number of Players: 1

Graphics/Sound Rating: Excellent
Play-Action Rating: Excellent
Solitaire Rating: Good
Head-to-Head Rating: Not Applicable
Overall Rating: 8

Just when you thought *Space Invaders* had been forgotten...

This version of the classic features aliens descending in rows of 10 across and five down, and offers four bunkers to hide behind. Hitting aliens in the top two rows scores 30 points, middle two rows, 20 points, bottom two, 10 points. Points vary for hitting the saucer.

The game tells you the current score, high score and how many cannons remain. Topping 1,500 points earns the player a fourth cannon. The aliens increase their speed as they descend, and the game can be played on either the keyboard or with the joystick.

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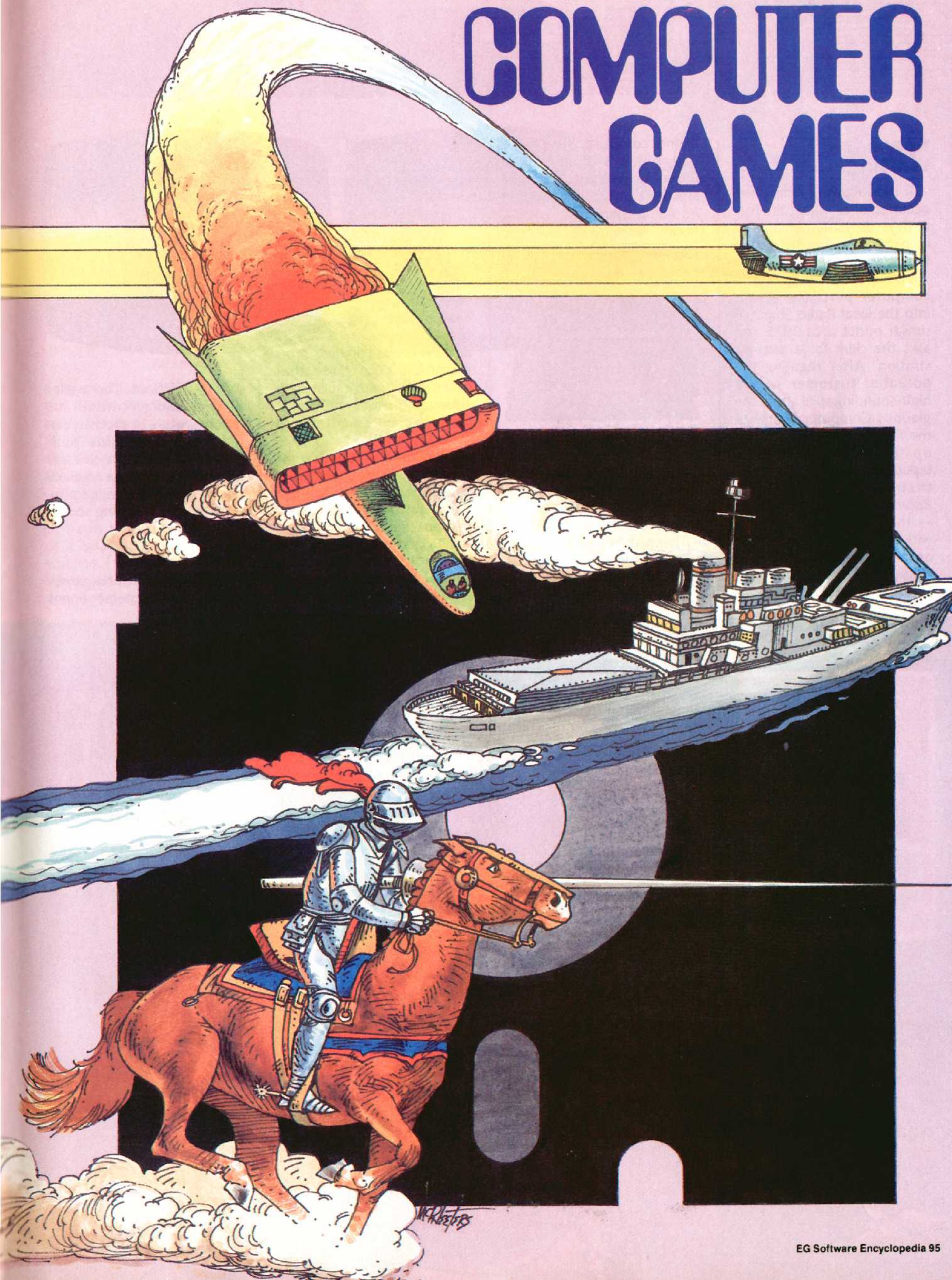
THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES



Showdown in the

Space is Waiting. . .

If the following little scene occurred once during the early days of home computing, it probably happened a thousand times:

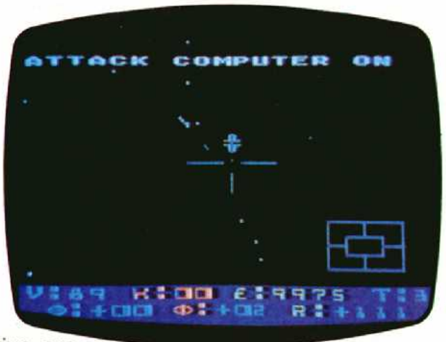
The would-be personal computer purchaser strolls into the local Radio Shack or similar outlet circa 1975 and asks the clerk for a demonstration. After regaling the potential customer with a high-sounding spiel about the glorious Computer World of the Future, the clerk powers up the machine, boots a taped program and — faster than you can say "Jack Robinson" fifty or sixty times — the small screen lights up with computerized tic-tac-toe or nine-man morris.

Such demonstrations certainly impressed pioneering home computerists of the day, but it is doubtful that video tic-tac-toe could've sparked anything like the booming electronic gaming hobby we know today. The negligible popularity of such simple contests — admittedly all that the early micros could handle — might have put gaming with computers on hold for several more years.

Things didn't turn out that way, of course. New types of games broadened interest in computer arcading by offering many different types of mental and physical challenges.

Many sources of inspiration helped bring modern microcomputer gaming to its present level, but none was more important than science fiction. When imaginative programmers discovered that putting short vertical lines on either side of a small circle produced a tie-fighter a la "Star Wars" that any gamer would instantly recognize, it opened up a new world of possibilities.

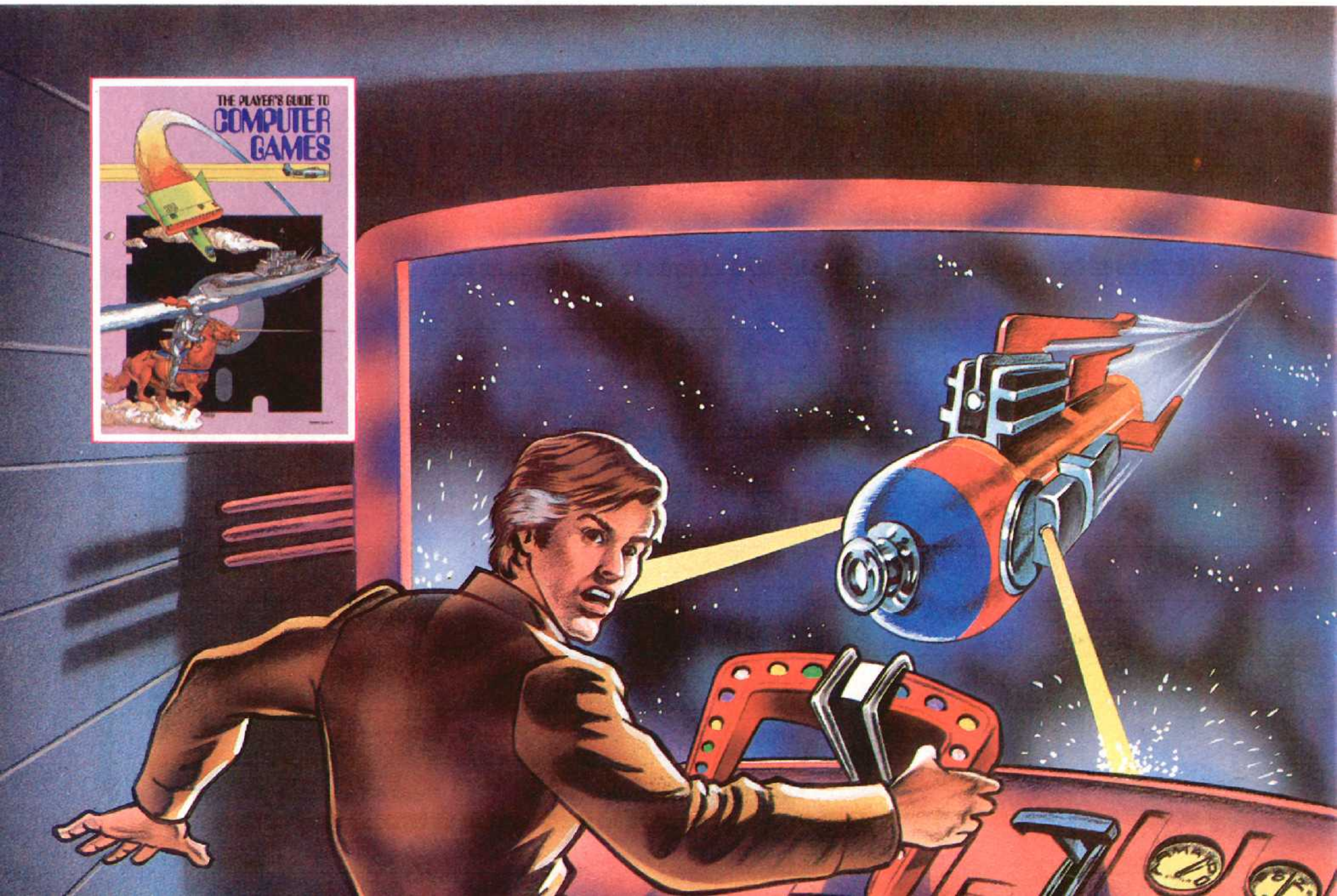
Ever since the first "trek"-type space piloting and combat programs burst onto the scene, the connection between science fiction and computer gaming has been strong and close. The availability of more powerful microcomputers in recent years has enabled software publishers to build on this relationship to provide a galaxy of outer space contests to delight game-playing computerists.



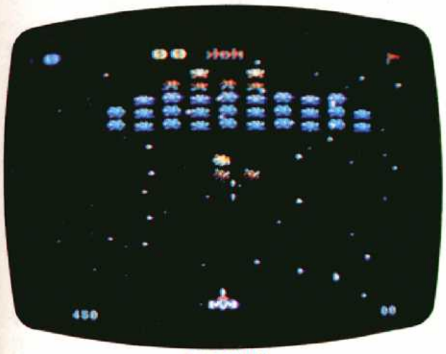
STAR RAIDERS

Stop, Thief!

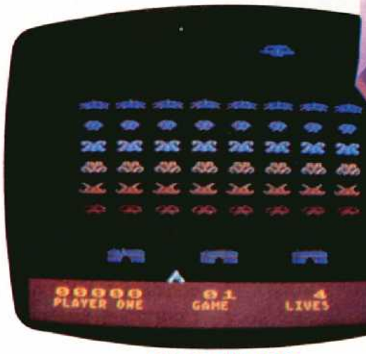
Most science fiction games portray the excitement and



Far Future



GALAXIAN

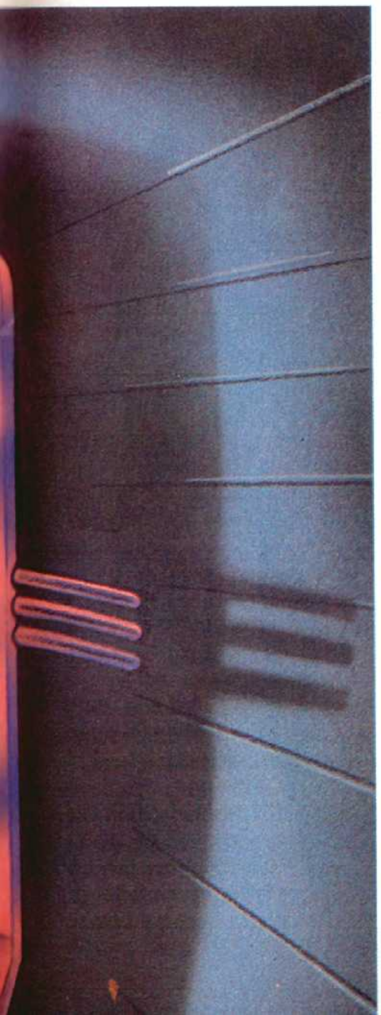


SPACE INVADERS

dangers of interstellar war to the death. **Bandits,** a multi-scenario invasion game by Sirius Software, instead focuses on the perils of crime on the cosmic scale.

In this colorful and varied arcade contest, the gamer operates as the security chief of a lunar base bedeviled by thieves from outer space. Wave after wave of deep-space desperadoes swoop across the screen and attempt to pick up a load of the base's equipment. The goal is to prevent the robbers from carrying the goodies back to their world.

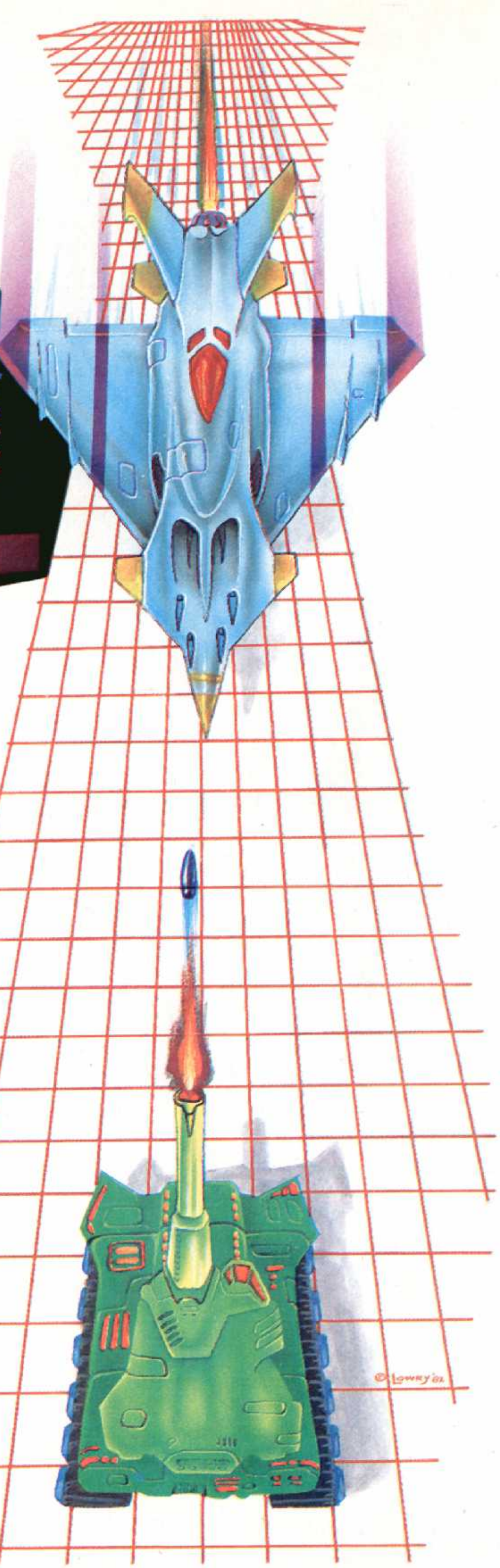
There are a variety of alien criminals with larceny on their minds. The arcader's cannon is protected by a shield, energized by thumping the space bar on the Apple's keyboard, but the available energy for this device is squeaky tight. The player will frequently have to face whole swarms of bandits without any form of protection beyond a quick hand on the joystick in order to save the shields for times when lack of such protection can spell certain elimination.



Flying Through the Universe

Star Raiders, by Atari for the 400 and 800 computers, gets many votes as the ultimate "trek" program. It was the first to blend the universe-spanning strategic phase of locating the enemy with pulse-pounding ship-to-ship dogfighting rendered in high resolution graphics. Small wonder that *Star Raiders* has placed at the top of every single reader popularity poll conducted by **EG** since the magazine's inception.

Apart from the often stunning visuals, the underlying strength of *Star Raiders* is that it gives the player a lot to do, from picking which of several displays to show on the screen to navigating through hyperspace to reach distant portions of the galaxy. There is so much happening, in fact, that several people can carve up the responsibilities and play as a team. Of course, the control scheme, described in minute detail in the profusely illustrated instruction manual, is simple and logical enough to be handled by a solo spacefarer.



Other superior games in this genre include Gebelli Software's **Zenith** and Sirius Software's **Epoch,** both for the Apple II. The latter concentrates on the tactical side of things, while the former asks the arcader to protect a city undergoing reconstruction from additional enemy attack.

Death Comes from Space

The invaders from the void are launching a rocket attack at the six cities lined up across the bottom of the screen. You command the defense, using a joystick-directed cursor to target the incoming missiles and destroy them with your own defensive rockets. That's the concept of **Missile Command**, a coin-op hit that has been, if anything, more successful as a home game than as a pay-for-play machine.

Atari's version for the 400/800 systems is probably the best of all the editions. Although there is only one command center under the player's control, this makes it easier to apply sophisticated strategy than in the somewhat busier and more frenetic commercial arcade device.

Non-Atarians may want to investigate **ABM**, a fairly similar program for the Apple II by Muse Software. Here, too, the idea is to fire at the incoming missiles and prevent them from flattening the cities under your protection.

The lack of a home tracball controller has frustrated true *Missile Commanders* for some time, since quick cursor movement is the road to victory. Both WICO and Atari will rectify this lack within the next year or so, which should gain even wider acceptance for this outstanding design.

Classic Space Thrills

It would be impossible to cover science fiction computer games without at least mentioning the three great standard programs — **Space Invaders, Asteroids** and **Galaxian.** Year in and year out, these three games have held their popularity against the encroachments of newer — and often more intricate — games.

Space Invaders probably deserves credit for sparking the commercial videogame boom back in 1979. Though it has vanished from all but the largest arcades, *SI* is still very much alive and well in home computerland. Atari's version

FLEEING THROUGH THE LETHAL LABYRINTHS

Those A-maze-ing Mazes

Electronic maze games are a fairly recent phenomenon, but the lure of the labyrinth's twisting and turning corridors has called out to mankind since the dawn of civilization. The myth of Theseus and the Minataur, in which the legendary hero penetrated the mighty beast's maze-like fortress, delighted citizens of the ancient world while paper-and-pencil mazes are still a popular diversion for young and old alike.

Mazes have added a fascinating strategic element to electronic gaming since **Pac-Man** first gobbled his way into the hearts of arcaders all over the world. The presence of an on-screen labyrinth turns movement from a series of mad dashes back and forth across the playfield into a fine art in which the player must plan his route of movement carefully to arrive safely at the desired destination.

There are three principal types of electronic maze games:

Maze-chases. In this type of contest, in which *Pac-Man* and **Ms. Pac-Man** are the most popular examples, the player's on-screen representative is generally a weak character who must avoid the menace of stronger pursuers while picking up objects lining the corridors while passing over them.

Maze-shoot-outs. This is a hybrid which combines elements of the maze-chase with blast-'em-up action. While there may be objects which must be acquired, the on-screen character must also duel with armed enemies patroling the playfield.

Maze-explorations. This type of game is the closest electronic equivalent to the paper mazes, mentioned earlier. The whole idea is to find the single usable path through the convoluted layout in the shortest possible time.

The Galloping Gobblers

Pac-Man, available in a fine home edition by Atari for its 400-800 computers, is the classic gobble game which

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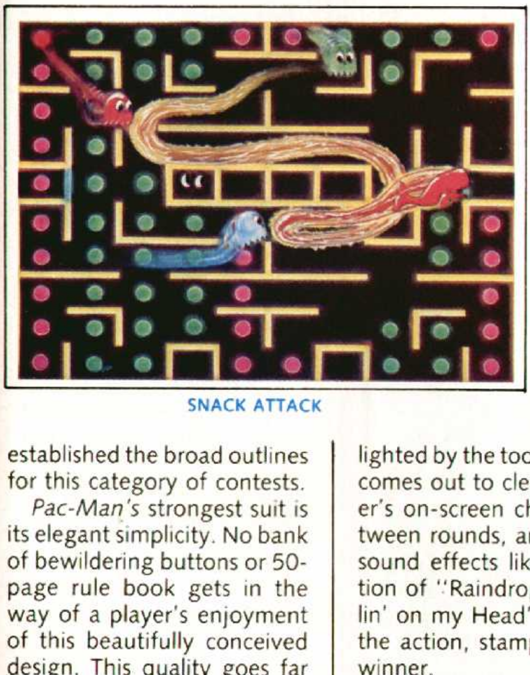
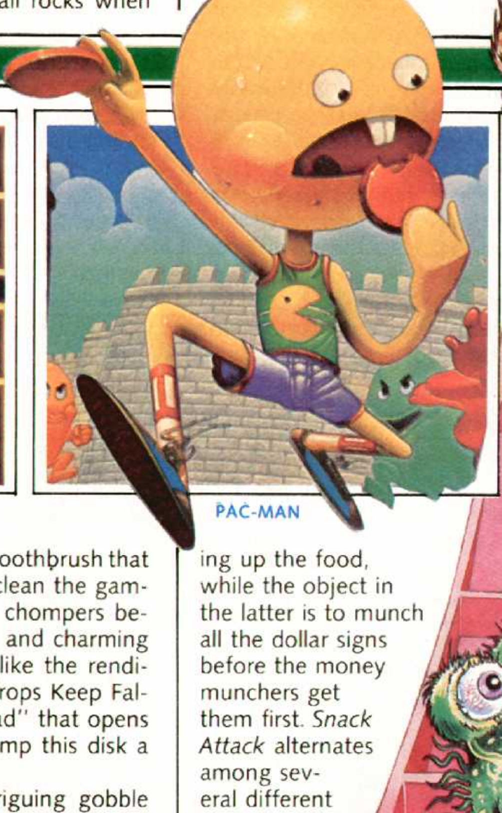
for the 400/800, originally introduced on cassette, is now available in the more convenient ROM cartridge form. It is a good game, even though the revised graphic treatment may be too dissimilar to the coin-op to please real fans. These purists are advised to check out Rocklan's **Super-Invaders**, a 400/800 game that is much closer to the quarter-snatching original.

Asteroids' unpredictability proved a refreshing change from the pattern laid down by *Space Invaders.* The use of a vector graphics monitor in the coin-op version has frustrated attempts to directly translate *Asteroids* to the home screen, though Atari's 400/800 edition is acceptable. However, the thrust-based movement system has cropped up in a number of other games. **StarMaze,** by Sir-Tech for the Apple II, may well be the best of these distant cousins. In it, the player pilots a small space cruiser through a labyrinth, only a portion of which is visible on the screen at any one time. This maze is filled with enemy ships to fight, "power jewels" to collect, and careening meteors which break into small rocks when struck by your weapon.

Although, *Galaxian,* something of a sequel to *Space Invaders,* did well in the commercial amusement centers, there's a bit of a shortage concerning home computer programs. The best of the crop is **Galactic Chase** for the Atari 400/800. Fortunately, it reproduces enough of the true arcade action to keep *Galaxian*-lovers happy for many moons to come.

Now that Atari has published a 5200 *Galaxian,* perhaps we'll soon see one for the 400/800.


SNACK ATTACK


PAC-MAN

established the broad outlines for this category of contests.

Pac-Man's strongest suit is its elegant simplicity. No bank of bewildering buttons or 50-page rule book gets in the way of a player's enjoyment of this beautifully conceived design. This quality goes far to explain why *Pac-Man* is often the first game a newcomer to a coin-op arcade will try. Its pocket universe is instantly understandable, though its wealth of strategic possibilities keeps players' eyes glued to the screen.

Jawbreaker, from On-Line Systems, is an Atari 400/800 program that ties a relatively standard Pac-style maze setup to the novel theme of a romp through a candy store. Entrancing graphics, highlighted by the toothbrush that comes out to clean the gamer's on-screen chompers between rounds, and charming sound effects like the rendition of "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on my Head" that opens the action, stamp this disk a winner.

Another intriguing gobble game for the Atari is **Ghost Hunter** by Arcade Plus. The added wrinkle in this one is that the player can, by eating a power pill, change into a ghostly gun and shoot the pack of nasties chasing him.

Datamost has published a pair of entertaining maze-chases for the Apple II, **Snack Attack** and **Money Munchers.** The former is a colorful design in which a whale swims through the maze eating up the food, while the object in the latter is to munch all the dollar signs before the money munchers get them first. *Snack Attack* alternates among several different mazes, while *Money Munchers* creates a new labyrinth at random for each round of play.

Finding the True Path

Exploration mazes, though admittedly the least popular of the three main types at the present time, hold an attraction for many. Such games generally give the player a "mouse" eye-view of the maze configuration, though there's usually an opportunity to get at least a brief look at the overall layout.

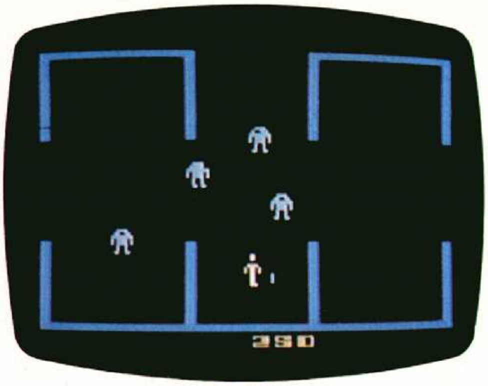
Both of the best-known maze-explorations are designed for use with the Atari 400/800 — **Thunder Island** (A.N.A.L.O.G. Software) and **Captivity** (PDI). The PDI title, already the best one on the market, is due to get even better shortly, since the company plans to have a redesigned and upgraded version in the stores by the time you read this. The new version will turn *Captivity* into a semi-adventure contest, as players will hunt for treasures and dodge dangers while trying to figure a way out.

Using Your Head

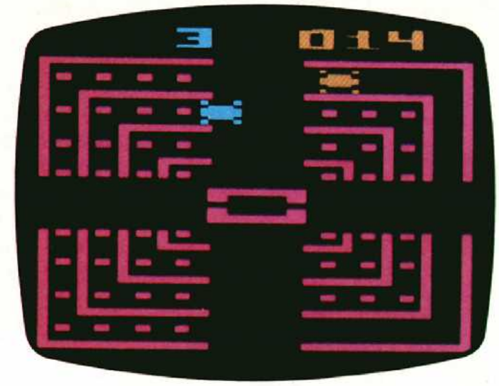
Most maze games reward hand-eye coordination richly, because they require a lot of intricate steering with many quick turns and reverses of direction. There are, however, a few significant exceptions.

Mission Escape, designed by CE Software's Jim Jacobson for the Apple II, turns the usual maze-shoot-out situation into a heavy strategy game by dramatically altering the movement scheme. Instead of allowing continuous input, it prompts the human player to enter a short series of moves followed by a similar interval during which the computer-controlled forces go on the march.

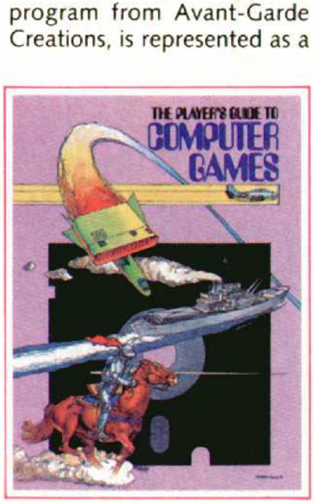
Lazer Maze, an Apple II program from Avant-Garde Creations, is represented as a simulation of a system of justice that prevails in the far future. One combatant (the player) must fire his lazer pistol into the maze and then predict its exit point. The lords of the maze materialize the computer-controlled foe at this point. If the human player correctly guesses where the beam leaves the playfield, the opponent is destroyed by the blast. Otherwise, the tables turn and the foe lobs a deadly bomb that is virtually certain to destroy the computerist's on-screen surrogate. The catch is that the playfield is dotted with mirrors which can reflect the lazer beam, making it quite challenging to quickly trace the expected course of the shot in the least possible amount of time.



BERZERK



DODGE 'EM



Corridors of Danger

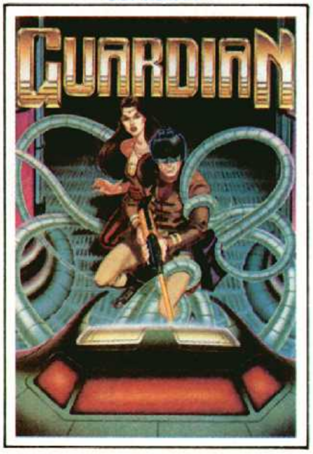
Although **Berzerk,** the title which did most to build the popularity of this type of game, has not reached the microcomputer market yet in an authorized edition, it hasn't prevented designers from applying the concept to quite a few computer programs.

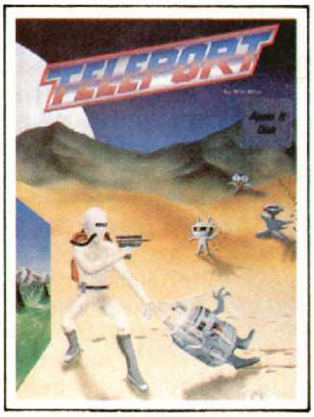
K-razy Shoot-out, by K-Byte for the Atari 400/800, is a smoothly executed maze-chase on ROM cartridge. The computerist directs an on-screen character through a series of rooms guarded by laser-firing robots who pop into view at random points along the walls. Its sophisticated scoring system gives accurate marksmanship its due, but places great stress on maneuvering so that the robots destroy themselves by shooting each other or stumbling into a wall.

More similar to the well-known maze-shoots are **Borg** (Sirius Software) and **Thief** (Datamost), both of which are playable on the Apple II. In both, players move from robot-filled room to robot-filled room, blasting away at attacking androids and dodging the sinister stalker who enters the fray when the player's on-screen character stays in one particular room too long.

Guardian, from Continental Software for the Apple II, tests the player's mettle against a series of increasingly dangerous mazes, including a couple with invisible, deadly walls. The gimmick here is that the hero begins each round completely surrounded by a ring of assorted creatures. As soon as the Guardian fires the first shot against the order of encircling enemies, all of the monsters make a beeline for him. He must dodge and shoot until he reaches the teleportation chamber, which randomly moves from corner to corner after each shot is fired.

GUARDIAN





TELEPORT

Teleportation also figures importantly in **Teleport,** the latest Apple II creation from Gavalier Software. The idea is to pick up one of the aliens which has gated in from another dimension and conduct it to the on-screen teleporter which will instantly ship it back from whence it came. Needless to say, it moves around quite a lot during the course of play, which makes completing the mission something less than a snap. It also doesn't help a bit that the player is absolutely defenseless from the time he stuns an alien until it is safely shoved through the teleporter.

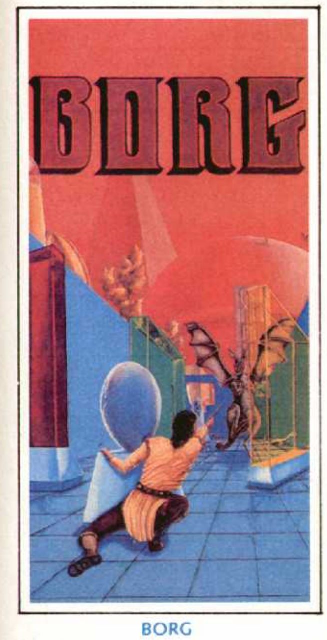
Driving the Maze

Walking or running isn't the only way to travel through one of these electronic labyrinths. Some games help the on-screen character save some shoe leather by having him ride up and down the snake-like corridors in some sort of vehicle.

Dodge 'Em, in which the player attempts to pick up dots while avoiding a collision with one or more "crash cars" is the original driving maze. It has proven a winner for Atari as both a coin-op and VCS cartridge.

Match Racer, by Synapse Software for the Atari 400/800 systems is a super-duper version of the concentric track design pioneered by *Dodge 'Em*. With twice as many possible pathways it becomes much more difficult to develop the "best route", and the player is thus forced to make many split-second decisions instead of merely carrying out a pre-determined pattern.

David Husch's **Mars Cars,** by Datamost for the Apple II, is an automotive treasure hunt on the red planet. Players use either joystick or keyboard to blast the maze barriers and get the four prizes on each level, while robot-controlled "mars cars" defend their turf by trying to ram into you. Once all four prizes are acquired, you simply drive through the warp door to reach the next in a series of 16 progressively more difficult playfields. Removing the maze barriers scores points, but it also gives the cars more room to roam.



BORG

Killer cars also provide the opposition in **Crazy Mazey,** by Ronald Meadows on Apple II disk. This keyboard-activated arcade-style game requires the player to steer a car through a succession of mazes, picking up the six bundles of cash scattered through each. Also cruising the grid-like playfield are computer-controlled death cars which always aim for a round-ending crash.

THE WORLD MARCHES TO WAR!

Of Battles and Bytes

People have played war games for nearly as long as they've been fighting the real thing. As most gamers know, chess is actually a highly abstract representation of medieval combat, complete with knights, castles and royalty.

Far less abstract in conception are the board war games first introduced by the Avalon Hill Company in the late 1950's, still popular with millions of armchair generals today. These usually involve moving pasteboard counters representing troops over a map divided into spaces by overlaying a hexagonal grid. Luck plays only the most minor role in such contests, since the ratio of attacking to defending forces, modified by terrain and other factors, usually suggests the outcome of any given battle.

NAPOLEON'S
CAMPAIGNS:
1813 & 1815
SSI

NAPOLEON'S CAMPAIGNS

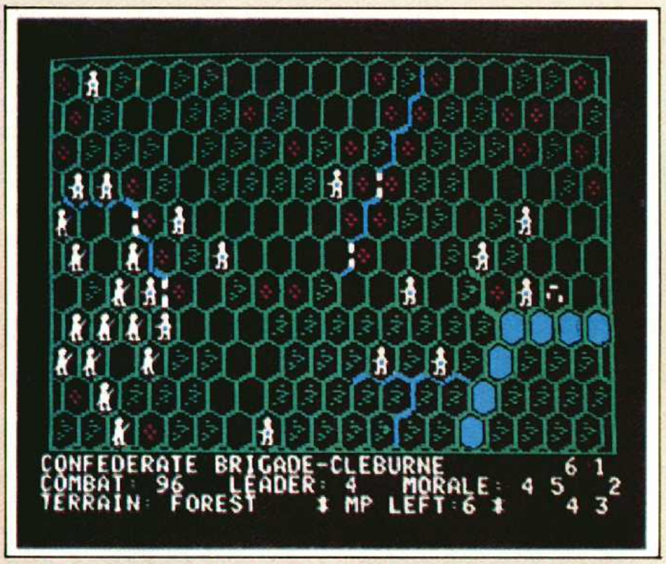
Non-electronic war games are not, however, without their drawbacks. They often take a long time to set-up, require a pair of reasonably well-matched opponents and eat up at least a couple of hours of playing time for each game.

Computerized war games, which have only appeared in a big way during the last 12-18 months, are designed to overcome all three of these problems. Set up is either automatic or quickly accomplished with a few keystrokes. Solitaire versions are included in most programs and speed of play is noticeably increased over most conventional war games.

Battles of Olde

While World War II is still the favorite setting for war games, many players are attracted to the seemingly simpler and somehow more romantic campaigns of the more distant past.

BILL FARNSWORTH



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CONFEDERATE BRIGADE-CLEBURNE        6 1
COMBAT: 96  LEADER: 4  MORALE: 4 5   2
TERRAIN: FOREST   $ MP LEFT:6 $   4 3
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In SSI's recreation of the Battle of Shiloh, a grid system is employed

Avalon Hill's Microcomputer Games Division has recently published **Legionnaire,** a slightly fanciful version of Caesar's conquest of Gaul (modern day France). The solitaire player takes the Roman banner and can adjust the difficulty of the game through selection of the tribes to be fought and the number of legions chosen to do the job. Some tribes are easy pickings for Caesar's infantry and cavalry, while others can give as good as they get.

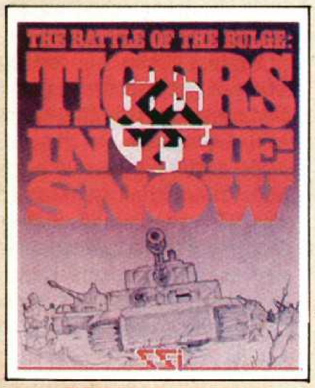
This game, designed by Chris "**Eastern Front**" Crawford, may be particularly suited to first-time computer war gamers. It's straightforward joystick-activated control system and the small number of units involved in the game make it a more approachable program than some of the more complicated battle programs.

Strategic Simulations has justly earned raves for its excellent line of electronic war games. **Napoleon's Campaigns** focuses on the continent-spanning military exexcursions of the man from Corsica, while the **Battle of Shiloh** allows gamers to refight one of the crucial battles of the Civil War.

Electronic Legends of World War II

World War II was the most colossal conflict in the history of humanity, with fighting taking place in almost every corner of the globe. Its historical effect on the modern era — and its tremendous personal impact on the lives of hundreds of millions of individuals — has made WWII the focus of more interest among computer war gamers than any other military event.

As is the case among board war gamers, electronic generals are especially enthusiastic about games based on the titanic struggle between Germany and Russia on the eastern front of the struggle. **Tigers in the Snow** (Strategic Simulations), **Eastern Front** (Atari) and **Dneipper River Line** (Avalon Hill) are three excellent simulations of aspects of this phase of the war. Another title likely to be of interest is Avalon Hill's **Tanktics,** which might best be thought of as a computer version of AH's nonelectronic **Panzerblitz,** playable solitaire.



TIGERS IN THE SNOW

The most intriguing game based on the Pacific theater of operations is Strategic Simulations' **Guadalcanal Campaign.** This is the first electronic "monster game", a term war gamers apply to a simulation that treats a battle or campaign in such minute detail that it may take hundreds of turns to refight the whole battle. Fortunately, *Guadalcanal Campaign* employs a particularly simple routine of play that leads the gamer through the action virtually effortlessly. As a result, *Guadalcanal Campaign* probably plays two or three times faster than a comparable conventional boardgame. If you've always wished you had time for one of those multi-map, 200-piece conventional war games but never did, this one is definitely worth a try.

War Today — and Tomorrow

Smashing out of recent headlines comes **Southern Command** from computer war gaming's number one publisher, Strategic Simulations. The Arab-Israeli War was a testing ground for weapons and tactics developed by the major superpowers, as well as a human drama of major proportions. Now you can find out if you could lead the Israelis to victory against the numerically superior Arab forces.

Much as all of us would wish, war is likely to follow humanity into the future. Another SSI title, **Warp Factor,** is a clever attempt to put battling space navies in the far future into computer game form. The array of available ship types, each with different weaponry and other charac-

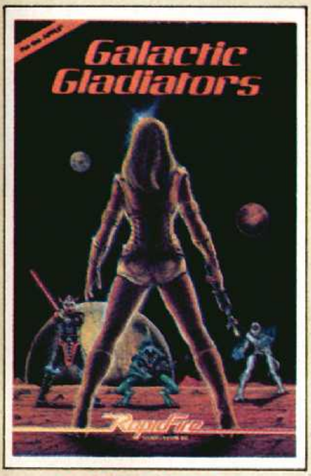
SOUTHERN COMMAND

SOUTHERN
COMMAND
SSI

teristics makes for an unusually varied and enjoyable space war contest that puts the emphasis on planning rather than action-game skills.

Hand-to-Hand Fighting

In creating a military simulation, one of the designer's most important decisions is choosing the scale. The same engagement can be looked at from an overall strategic level involving entire armies and navies moved as though they were single entities, an operational perspective in which divisions, regiments and brigades are the concern in a tactical contest in which the doings of squads and platoons are of central interest.



GALACTIC GLADIATORS

While most war games treat the operational or strategic aspects of the conflict in question, more and more attention is being paid to small unit engagements in some of the newer titles. Good examples are **Galactic Gladiators** and **Cytron Masters,** two of the Rapidfire Games recently introduced by Strategic Simulations. The former presents hand-to-hand fighting between small elite units in the far future, while the latter revolves around fights between custom-designed one-man air cars.

Swashbuckler, from Datamost, takes a romantic period from the past as its inspiration, rather than growing out of science fictional speculation about the nature of war in the future. In this solitaire contest, the player is a brave swordsman who might fight a veritable army of pirates on the deck of his ship. Well-thought-out keyboard controls permit the player to move the on-screen hero around and execute several offensive and defensive sword-fighting maneuvers.

War — Arcade Style

What could be a more natural backdrop for a target or shooting game than war? This accounts for the fact that there are many titles which are arcade games with a military theme rather than realistic military simulations.

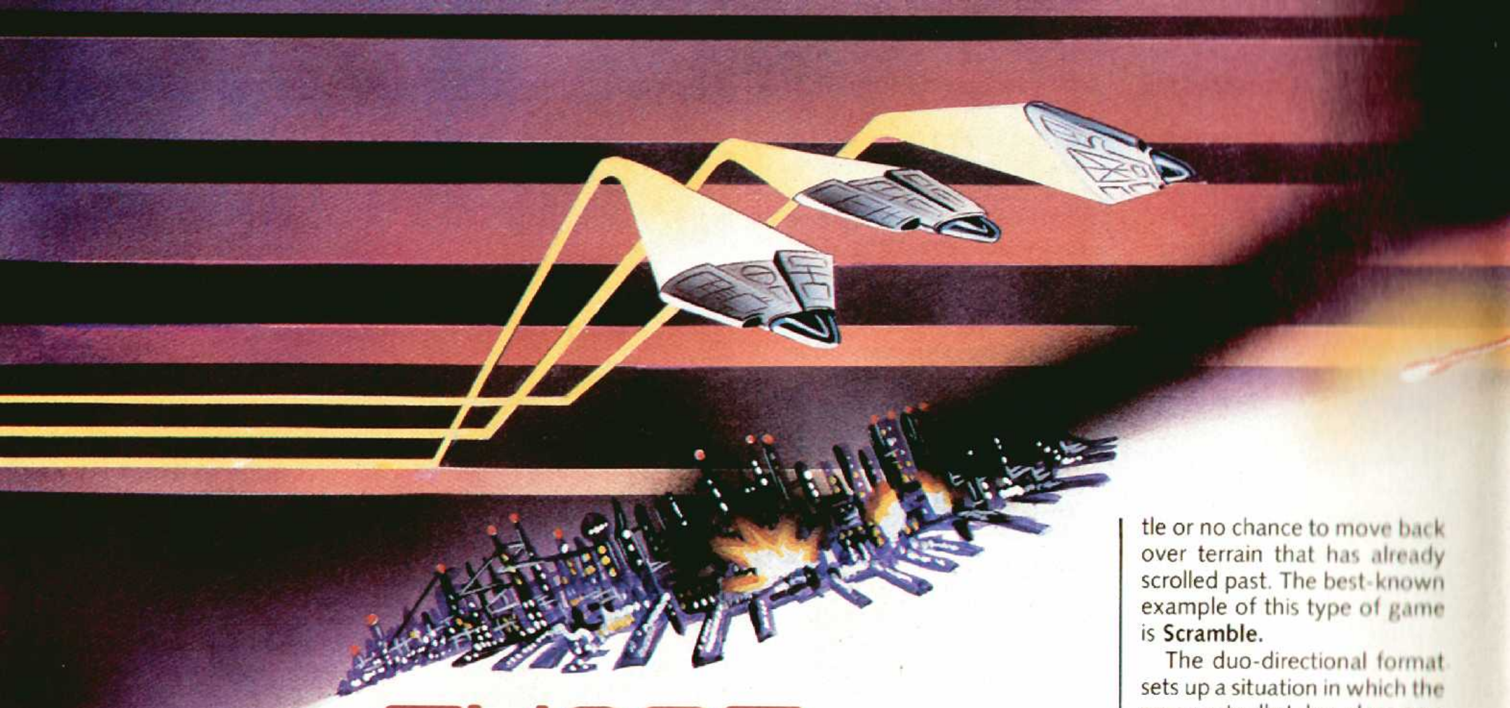
One of the cleverest of these is **Night Mission,** a video pinball disk from SubLogic. Winner of a 1983 Arcade Award for Best Computer Audio/Visual Effects, *Night Mission* translates the idea of a night bombing raid over Europe into an action-packed electronic flipper game with loads of user-modifiable features.

Broderbund's **Sea Fox** for the Apple II involves the WWII-era running conflict between hunter submarines and destroyer escorts charged with protecting all shipping. *Sea Fox* puts the player at the helm of a heavily armed sub which must sink a series of convoys against the opposition of fleets of enemy submarines and destroyers. High resolution graphics and multiple scenarios of increasing difficulty are among the program's best features.

Kamikaze by Hayden Software, on the other hand, echoes the air-sea battles which frequently occurred in the Pacific phase of the Second World War. The arcader commands a surface vessel which must shoot down the aircraft passing by overhead before it is bombed or becomes the victim of a suicide attack by one of the planes.

B. FARNSWORTH

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO
COMPUTER
GAMES



THOSE SENSATIONAL SCROLLING SHOOT-OUTS

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO
COMPUTER
GAMES

Here Comes Trouble

Once upon a time, the boundary lines of a single play-screen hemmed in videogaming action. If a player's character reached the edge of the picture, only one of three things could happen:

1. The character rebounded in the opposite direction.
2. The character destructed instantly upon contact with the edge.
3. The character vanished briefly, only to reappear at the corresponding spot on the opposite edge.

The development of scrolling for electronic games introduces a fourth possibility: The entire playfield "pans" in the direction of movement so the character never lacks for running room.

Although sports simulations and adventures use scrolling quite extensively, arcade programs represent the most exciting application of this feature.

There are two main varieties of scrolling shoot-outs, mono-directional and duo-directional. The first category consists of games in which the scenery moves slowly across the screen in a constant direction. This type of scrolling shoot-out gives the player little or no chance to move back over terrain that has already scrolled past. The best-known example of this type of game is **Scramble.**

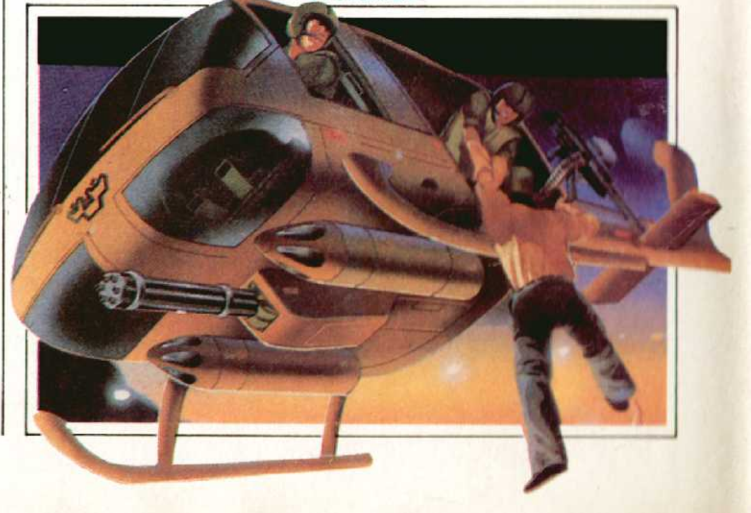
The duo-directional format sets up a situation in which the game actually takes place on a number of different screens connected edge to edge. The gamer's on-screen representative — usually some sort of armed craft — can go back and forth at will, moving from screen to screen as necessary. The most familiar duo-directional scrolling shoot-out is **Defender.**

The virtues of the scrolling shoot-out are immediately obvious to any game fan. They generate a very high level of excitement as the player runs the gauntlet of assorted dangers.

A Mission of Rescue

They won't release the hostages. They've got your citizens under close arrest in a series of barracks. Your mission: pilot your helicopter from a reasonably secure launch pad to where the hostages are being held and ferry them to freedom.

CHOPLIFTER



Of course, the captors aren't going to meet you with open arms and a brass band. Enemy tanks patrol the area around the barracks, and overflights by rival jets are also fairly common.

High resolution graphics for **Choplifter** (Broderbund) are among the best you'll ever see in a game for the Apple II. The helicopter can be turned to face due East or West — or even point right at the player during an anti-tank strafing run. Animation of the hostages is also fine. When the whirlybird lands near a barracks building which it has previously blown open, the captives run across the screen toward the 'copter from all directions.

There are three on-screen scoring indicators. One notes the number of hostages who have been safely delivered to your home, the second indicates how many hostages are actually in the helicopter, and the third shows how many hostages have perished during the rescue try.

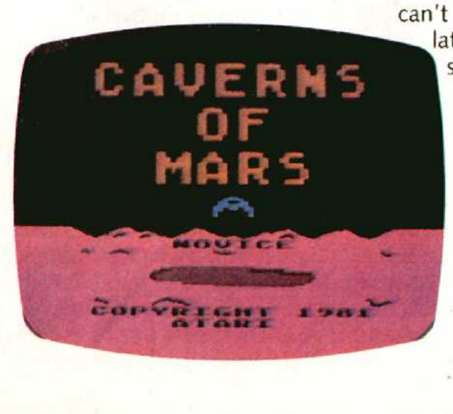
Perils of the Red Planet

Caverns of Mars, a prize-winning program originally troduced as part of the Atari Program Exchange (APEX), has successfully made the big jump to the company's regular software line for the 400/800 computers.

This mono-directional scroller is somewhat unusual in that the playfield moves up the screen instead of to the right or left. The goal is to pilot your spacecraft down the tunnels that honeycomb the red planet and destroy the installation at the center. Once that is accomplished, the gamer has to get the lead out and race upward through the tunnels before the explosion of the installation catches the ship in its wake.

Running the Gauntlet

Protector, originally created by Mike Potter for Crystalware, appeared in a much improved version for Synapse Software during 1982. Now this duo-directional blast-'em-up has been released for a third time as **Protector II.** It's worth untangling the confusion of the titles if you own an Atari 400 or 800 with 32K of memory, however, since the latest edition is, by all odds, the best yet. Perhaps Mike Potter will continue to revise this multi-scenario scroller every year or so to keep it right up with the state of the art. But if you're too impatient to wait for **Protector Mark X,** you can't miss with this title's latest incarnation. Absolutely outstanding.

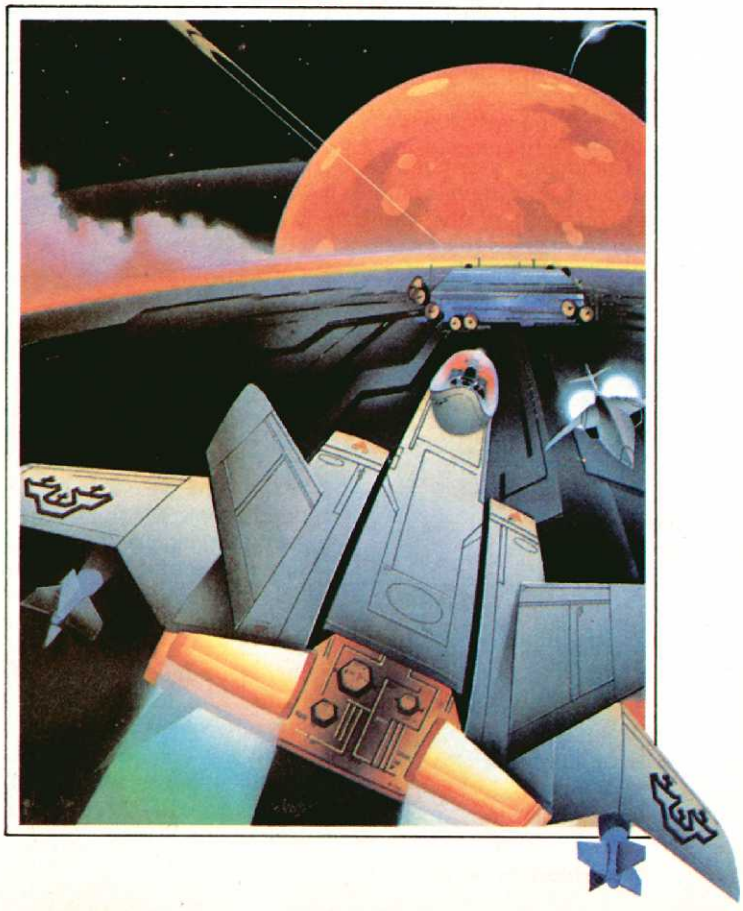


Tony Suzuki displays his brand of design artistry in **Star Blazer,** an Apple II program that boasts some of the most intricate graphics that ever decorated an arcade game. Any doubters are encouraged to carefully observe what happens when one of the periodic resupply missions drops a care package into a tree instead of into the lap of your attack fighter.

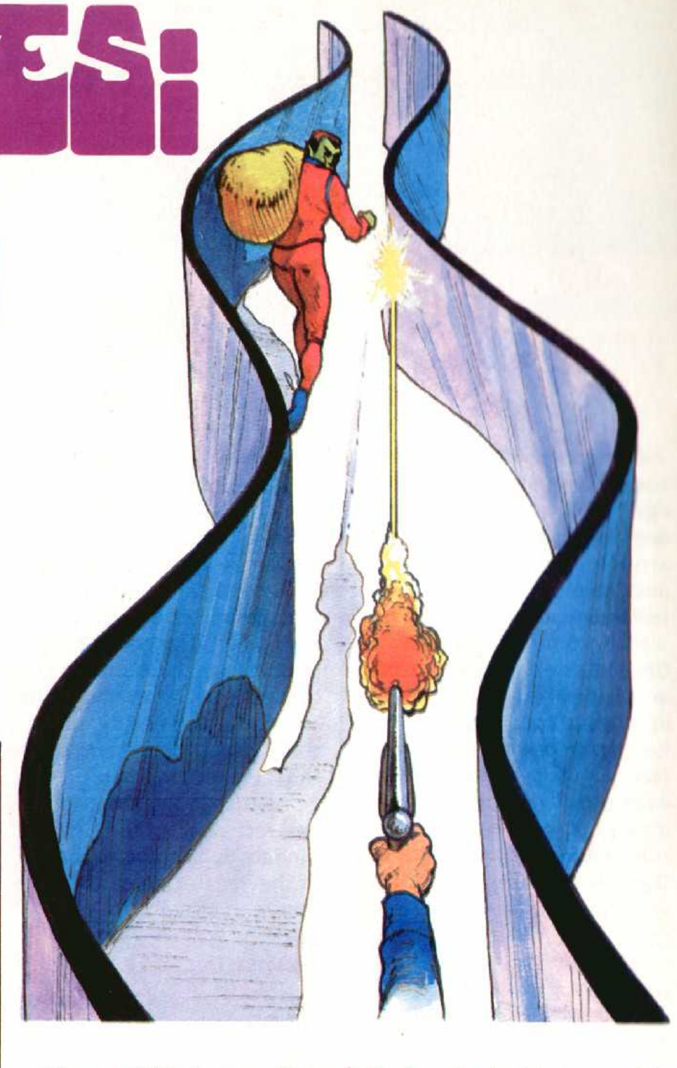
Neptune, an Apple II title from Gebelli Software, takes the mono-directional scrolling shoot-out beneath the waves. You command a well-armed submarine with which you must blast a pathway through to reach the undersea foes. Shooting and avoidance scenarios are both included, which provides the kind of variety that extends the play-life of a program.

Another excellent multi-scenario scrolling shoot-out is **Starblaster** by Picadilly Software for the Apple II. One of the most unusual features of this program is that it has an unusually complete demonstration mode. You can see all of the scenarios clear to the end of the line (the alien super-ship) even before you get good enough to penetrate that far during a real round of play.

STAR BLAZER



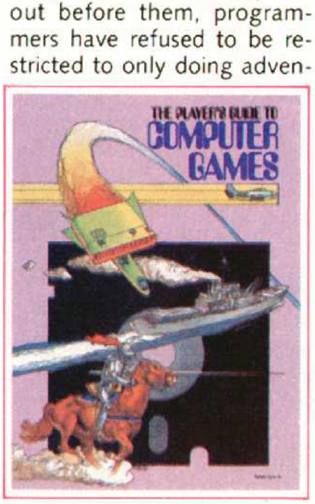
ADVENTURES: JOURNEYS THROUGH THE MIND



A Guide for Heroes

When E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson invented the nonelectronic game that eventually reached the marketplace as **Dungeons and Dragons**, the main idea was to provide some interesting between-battles local color for fantasy miniatures campaigns. It wasn't long, however, before other publishers like Game Designers Workshop began applying the concept of role assumption games to other settings, including science fiction.

Computer adventures are, of course, a development growing out of the earlier non-electronic role-playing contests. With examples of themes on which to base computer adventures spread out before them, programmers have refused to be restricted to only doing adventure disks with a fantasy theme.



One of the most popular categories is the science fiction computer adventure. Although some action adventures and illustrated adventures have appeared, text-only seems to be a popular format for this type of disk. The idea, evidently, is that many players would rather imagine their own spaceships, aliens and unexplored worlds rather than deal with relatively primitive on-screen representations of such things. Of course, the way graphics are improving these days, it won't be long before SF adventures vie with cartoons or even special movie effects in the visuals department.

Champions of the Spacelanes

The designer of the celebrated **Empire of the Over-Mind** has now produced a new title called **GFS Sorceress**, usable on most of the popular microcomputers. As Joe Justin, expelled into deep space for a murder which he did not commit, you must find and repair a spaceship (The GFS Sorceress of the title) and then set about clearing your name. This involves visiting several different planets which are all components of the interlocking riddle, which upon solving, will restore Joe Justin's good name.

Queen of Phobos, an illustrated adventure, is a treasure hunt through a giant semi-abandoned ship, the Queen of Phobos. The player must wander through the intricate maze of halls, finding treasures and having run-ins with a band of looters who have the very same idea in mind.

Starcross, the newest entry from Infocom, also tests the player's skill by having him (or her) explore a ship from another galaxy which has cruised into your space territory with a challenge for humanity. Like other Infocom games, this one is beautifully packaged (in a plastic flying saucer) and also contains supplementary materials which may well come in handy during the mission.

Another fine science fiction mindbender is **Cyborg**, an Apple II disk written by SF author Michael Berlyn. He has done a fine job, too, when it comes to crafting a highly distinctive test of the player's reasoning powers. Can you find out what happened to wipe out your short-term memory in time to thwart the crisis that menaces you?

Time-Tripping

If rocketing through the universe isn't precisely your cup of tea, how about a jaunt through the past? Two first-rate games with this tome are currently available, **Time Zone** and **Adventures in Time.**

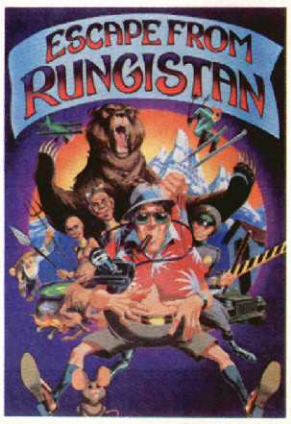
The former is particularly noteworthy. It's a multi-disk epic in which the player must visit numerous eras of the past and future — and even take a short trip to another planet — in order to prevent a doomsday device from wiping all life from the face of the Earth.

Mystery and Intrigue

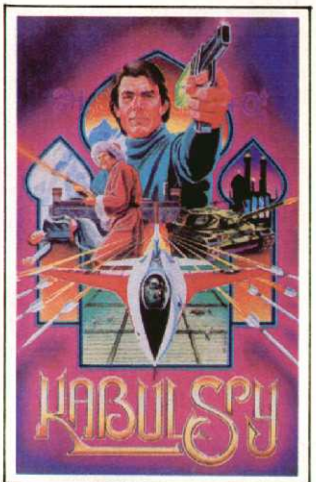
As previously mentioned, the year just ended saw a great expansion in the subject matter of computer adventures. Besides the fantasy quests and science fiction odysseys, designers have also turned their hands to sharply different adventure game topics.

Currently, there's quite a vogue for mystery and espionage games as a welcome change-of-pace from the more "other worldly" types.

By all odds the best of these is Infocom's **Deadline.** You're a detective with only 12 hours to solve a murder at the Rubner Mansion. Not only does this text-game allow players to communicate in complete sentences instead of just cryptic verb/noun word phrases, but the non-player characters seem to take on lives of their own, scurrying around the mansion on who-knows-what sinister errands.



ESCAPE FROM RUNGISTAN



KABUL SPY

Sirius Software has published a pair of really unorthodox adventure programs. **Kabul Spy** sends the gamer behind the Iron Curtain to bring a noted scientist back to the free world, while **Escape from Rungistan** is based on the idea of a vacation going haywire, necessitating a break from the Rungistan jail and lots of runnin' and hidin'.

Mission Impossible, one of the original Scott Adams Adventures, has gotten a facelift that should secure a much wider audience than it captured the first time around. The new edition, part of Adams International's Saga series, adds high-resolution color illustrations and, if you have a Votrax synthesizer, a full complement of speech and sound effects.

Realms of Fantasy

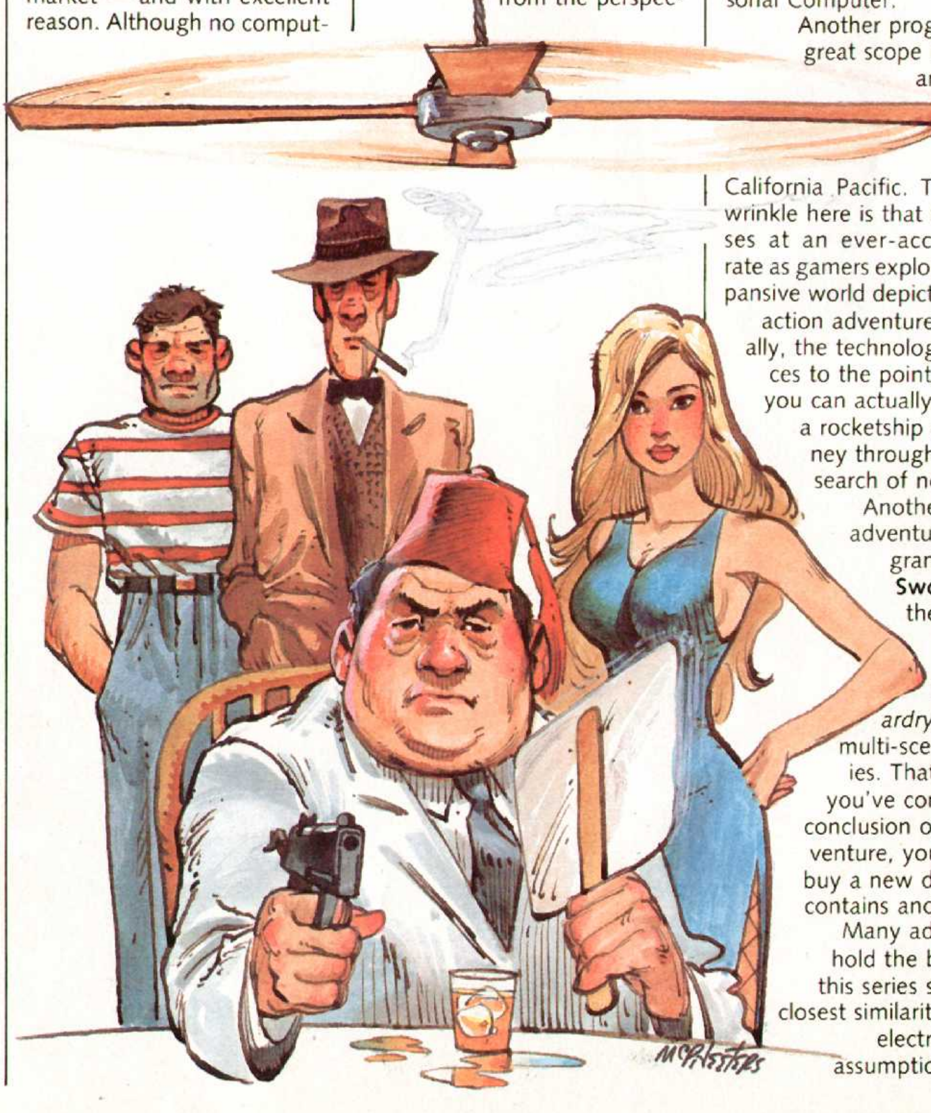
Of course, the world of swords and sorcery has sparked the creation of more adventure games than all other sources combined. There's something about the thrill of saving the day with a timely spell or deadly sword-thrust that fascinates a good number of computerists.

Wizardry, by Sir-Tech for the Apple II, is generally regarded as the best fantasy role-playing game on the market — and with excellent reason. Although no computer game yet invented can match the creativity of a topflight live dungeonmaster, *Wizardry* includes more of the features adventure gamers want most than any other title. For instance, there are sharply delineated character classes, a wide assortment of treasures and monsters and a well-animated underground maze which is viewed from the perspective of someone actually stalking down the twisting and turning halls.

Those who've already mastered *Wizardry* will want to try their hand at **Knight of Diamonds,** an adventure module for the most powerful characters who have already survived the challenge of *Wizardry.* More such modules are promised as is a deluxe edition for the 64K IBM Personal Computer.

Another program with great scope is **Ultima,** an Apple II game published by California Pacific. The novel wrinkle here is that time passes at an ever-accelerating rate as gamers explore the expansive world depicted in this action adventure. Eventually, the technology advances to the point at which you can actually hop into a rocketship and journey through space in search of new thrills.

Another fantasy adventure on the grand scale is **Swordthrust,** the creation of Don Brown. Like *Wizardry,* this is a multi-scenario series. That is, when you've come to the conclusion of one adventure, you can just buy a new disk which contains another one. Many adventurers hold the belief that this series shows the closest similarity to non-electronic role-assumption games.



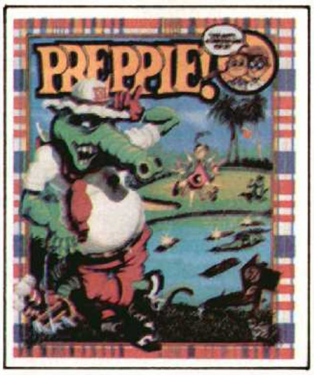
THE COMPUTER ARCADE

Crossing the Road

It is extremely doubtful that anyone reading this magazine made it through kindergarten without hearing the riddle, "Why did the chicken cross the road?" Several companies, noting the success of **Freeway,** the VCS-compatible cartridge from Activision, are now trying to help computer gamers answer this question.

Frogger, by Sierra On-Line for the Apple II, is a faithful translation of Sega's popular pay-for-play machine. All the play-action, sounds and graphics of the original have apparently survived intact, and this computer edition is a "must buy" for anyone who has ever spent time at the local commercial amusement center trying to steer the amphibian through the traffic and across the river to home.

Quite similar, albeit with a somewhat different graphic treatment, is **Cricketeer.** This time, players use the keyboard controls to hop the gallant cricket to a protected haven.



Finally, for those who enjoy a dash of way-out humor, there is Scott Adams' **Preppie.** This arcade game, available for just about every system, gives you the chance to do something drastic to all those folks in the alligator shirts.

A Lighter Touch

Most computer arcade games are pretty much sober-sided affairs, but a dash of humor *does* manage to worm its way in occasionally. One of the best at injecting a note of humor into otherwise challenging games is Mark Turmell.

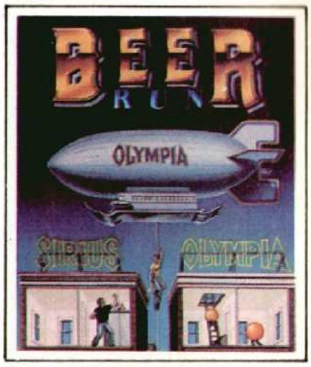
Beginning with **Sneakers** and continuing through **Beer Run** and **FreeFall,** all marketed by Sirius Software, Turmell has displayed a deft touch when it comes to creating cartoon-style computer graphics that wouldn't be out-of-place on a Saturday morning kiddie show.

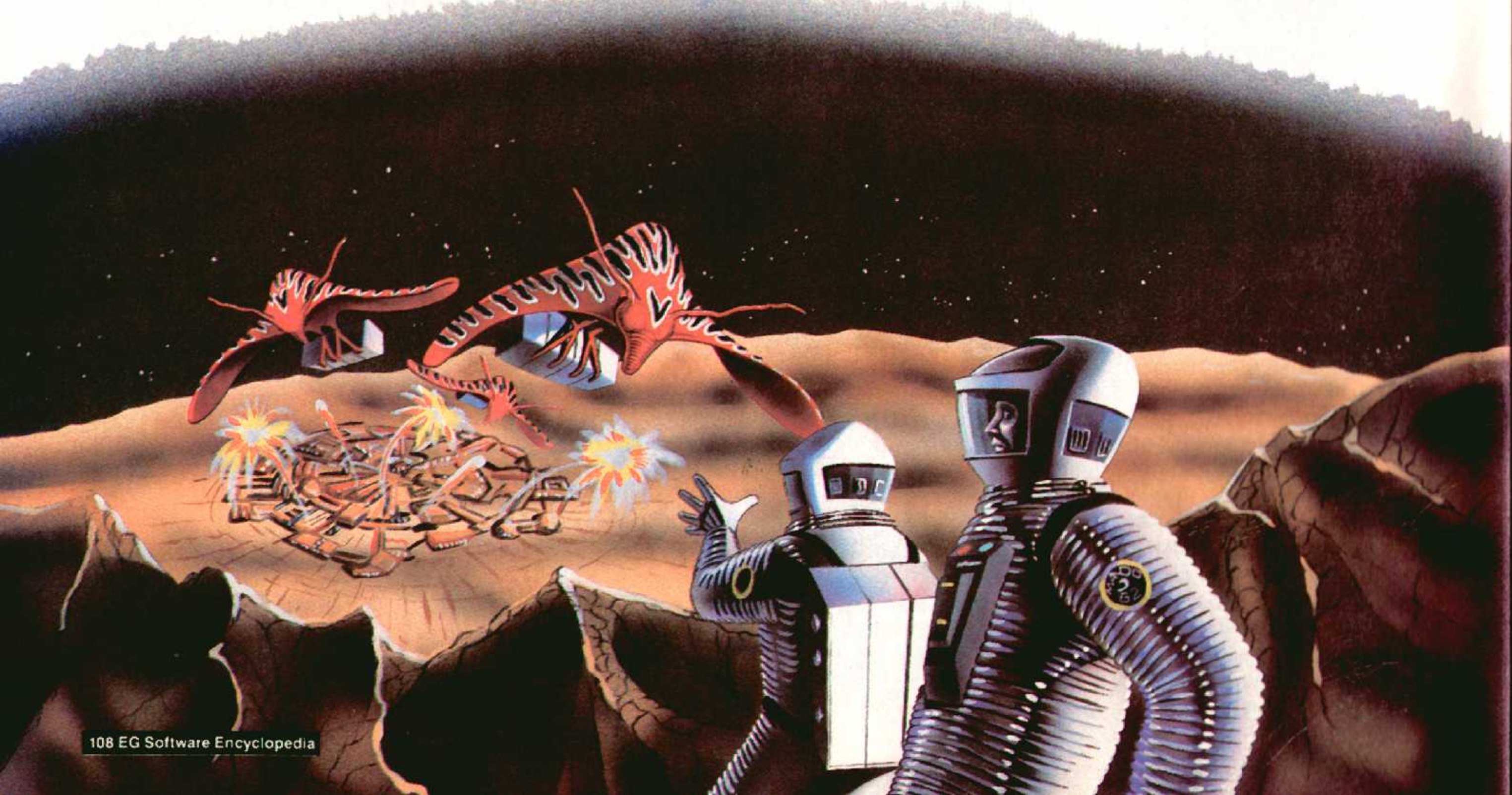
Games to Flip Over

David's Midnight Magic (Broderbund), **Raster Blaster** (BudgeCo) and **Night Mission** (SubLogic) prove that pinball and videogames aren't as incompatible with each other as some skeptics had thought.

David's Midnight Magic, for instance, has a two level table with multi-ball capacity that any flipper fanatic would have to love. There's even a special feature that lets a player who has hit the right combination of playfield features save a ball before it disappears down one of the side drains. David Snider won an Arcade Award for the Best Computer Game of 1983. Anyone who boots up this disk will quickly know how richly he deserved the honor for this video pinball extravaganza.

Even fancier is *Night Mission.* It presents a table with the theme of an after-dark World War II bombing run with the caliber of sounds and play features that is a dream come true for any video pinballer. Better yet, most of the parameters in the game, including ball speed, the amount of time a ball stays in a kick-out hole and so forth, are quickly and easily modifiable by the computerist. If you like your *Night Mission* with multiple ball shadows and slow-motion during multi-ball play, you can fix the game to your liking with just a couple of keystrokes. While *Night Mission's* table sometimes *does* display the tendency toward over-activity beyond the player's control, it is nonetheless a total treat for the gaming senses.





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HALL OF FAME

Will Your Favorite Game Get Elected?

By THE EDITORS OF ELECTRONIC GAMES

Immortality is waiting for two outstanding videogames. Which ones? Ah, but that's the question which the electronic gamers of America must answer by voting in the annual Videogame Hall of Fame Election.

Even a forward-looking hobby like electronic gaming should not neglect its own illustrious past. That's why **Electronic Games** magazine decided, last year, to establish a continuing monument to the best videogames ever created — the Videogame Hall of Fame.

Currently running within the select circle are **Pong** (Atari), **Space Invaders** (Taito), **Asteroids** (Atari), **Pac-Man** (Namco/Midway), **Quest for the Rings** (Odyssey), **Major League Baseball** (Mattel), **Defender** (Williams) and **Star Raiders** (Atari). That number will be increased by two games as a result of this year's election.

All you've got to do to participate is fill out the voting coupon below and mail it to **Electronic Games.** The two videogame cartridges, coin-op machines or microcomputer game programs that corral the greatest number of votes will be installed in the Hall of Fame.

In the most recent voting, some of the titles which barely missed election included **Tempest** (Atari), **Donkey Kong** (Nintendo), **K.C. Munchkin** (Odyssey), **Astrosmash** (Mattel) and **Demon Attack** (Imagic). Will this be the year that one or more of these contenders makes the grade? Or will other super-games ride to glory on a wave of public support? The answer is up to you: Vote!

Rules for Voting for the Videogame Hall of Fame

1. Any knowledgeable electronic gamer is eligible to vote.
2. Only one nomination shall be made by any one person.
3. Any commercially published programmable videogame cartridge, coin-operated electronic game or microcomputer game software program is eligible for nomination.
4. All nominations must be received on the ballot included in **Electronic Games** magazine. A copy or facsimile is perfectly acceptable, if you do not wish to deface your copy of the magazine.
5. The deadline for nominations for the 1982 Videogame Hall of Fame Election is **April 1, 1983.**
6. All ballots should be sent to: **Electronic Games,** Hall of Fame, 235 Park Avenue South, Sixth Floor, New York, NY 10003. Ballots received become the property of **Electronic Games** magazine and none can be returned.

Sounds simple? It is. The two games which receive the highest number of nominations will be inducted into the Videogame Hall of Fame. A complete report of the voting, along with some selected comments from readers about the games will appear in the September, 1983 issue of **Electronic Games** magazine.

I would like to nominate the following programmable videogame, coin-op game or microcomputer software program for inclusion in the Videogame Hall of Fame:

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The main reason I feel this game merits such an honor is: ______________________________

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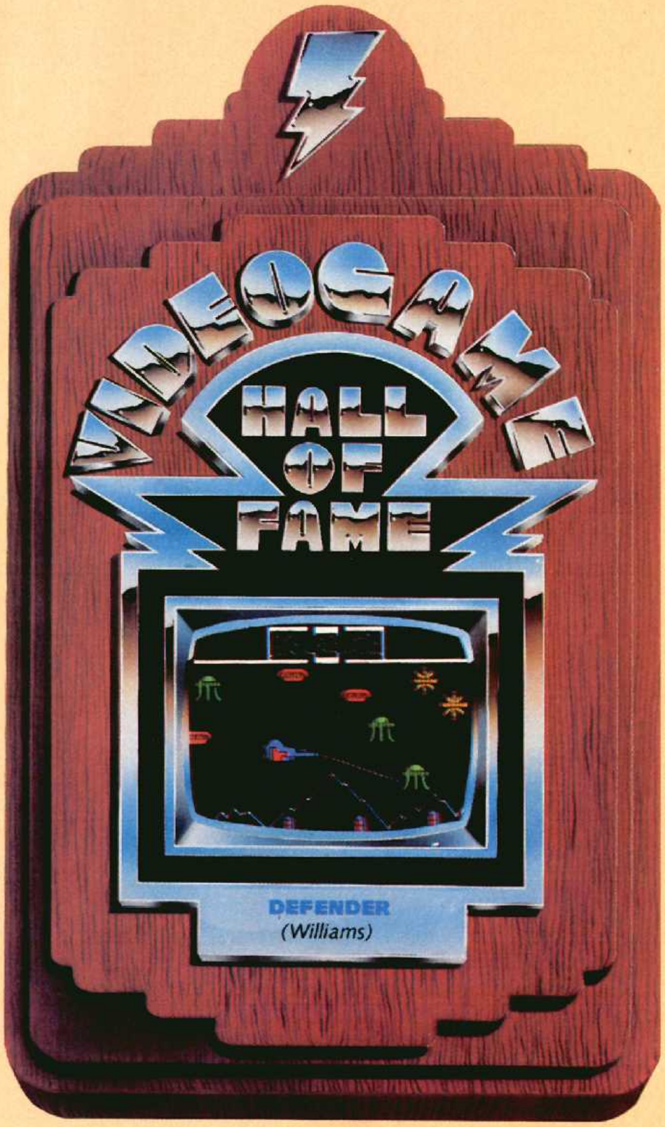
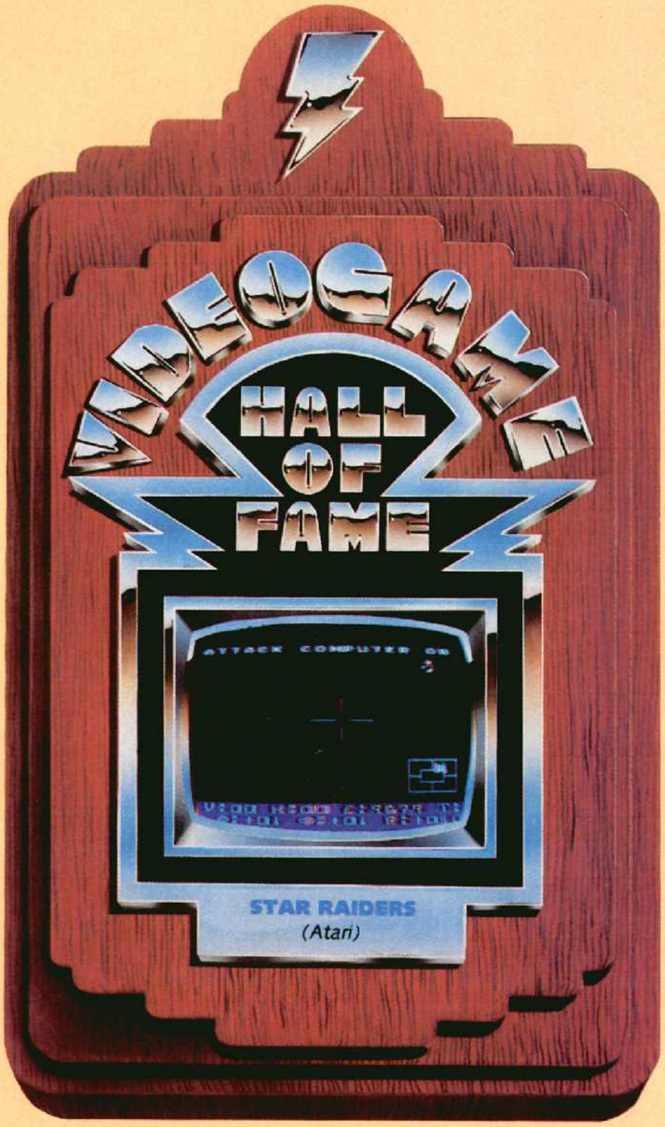
My Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

Send all ballots, including copies and facsimiles to: Electronic Games, Hall of Fame, 235 Park Avenue South, Sixth Floor, New York, N.Y. 10003.





Defender

(Williams)

When some future historian compiles a list of the really important videogames, look for **Defender** to appear in a place of honor at or near the top of the roll. With the exception of **Pac-Man,** no game has exerted a stronger effect on commercial amusement centers over such a long period of time.

The reason is crystal clear to anyone who has ever staked a quarter on this machine. *Defender* features the type of thrill-a-minute action that has made the scrolling shoot-out — the genre it pioneered so successfully — one of the most popular play-formats ever incorporated into an electronic game.

Defender is markedly different from the games which preceded it on the coin-op sales chart. Rather than repeating the same action over and over, this game is a mini-adventure with the clearly defined goal of saving the survivors of a planet-wide attack.

And when you've achieved that objective, you know you've really done something. *Defender* is the most difficult of the super-popular coin-ops.

Star Raiders

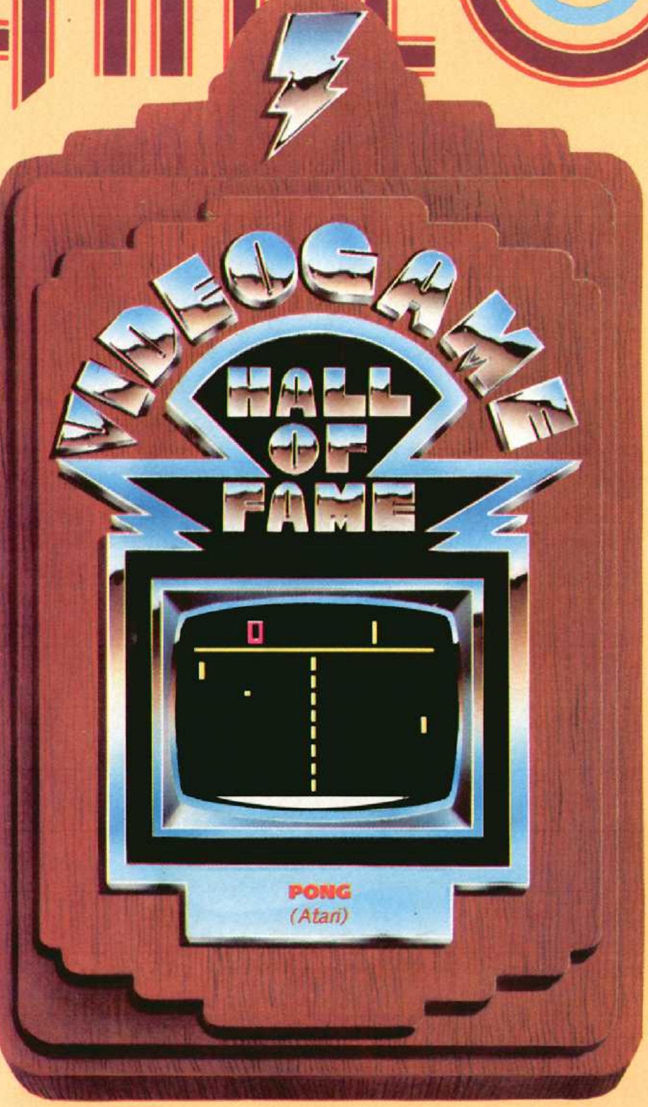
(Atari)

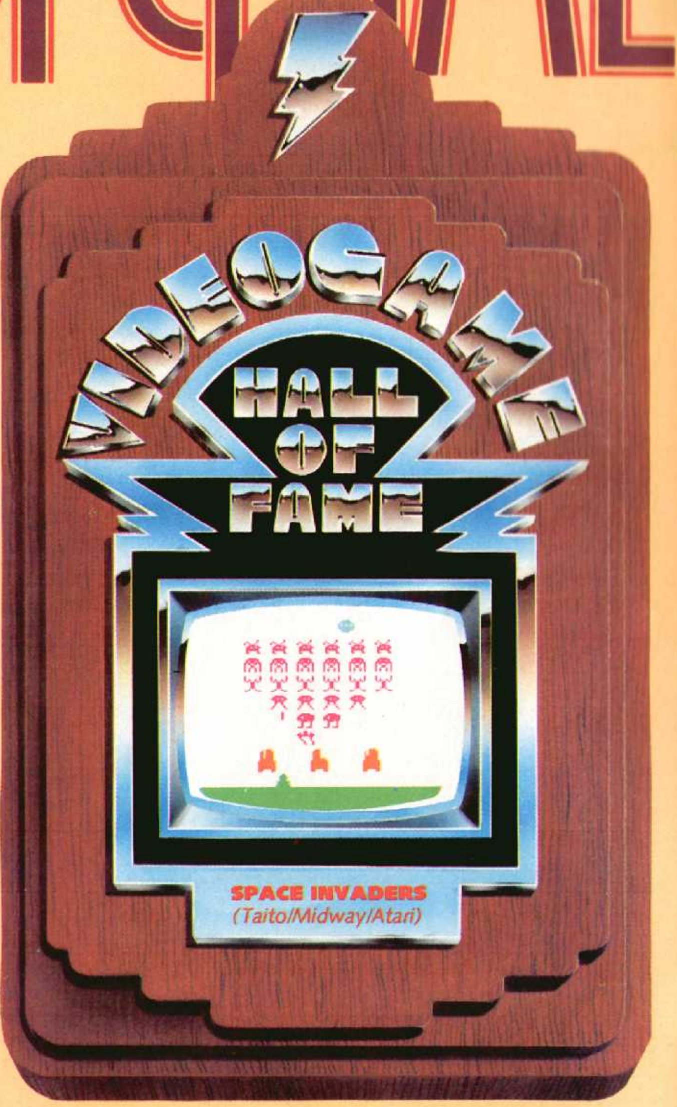
Everyone talks about the tremendous pace of innovation in the computer field, yet here's a game that has remained virtually as fresh and stimulating as the day Atari shipped its first cartridges to the retail stores. **Star Raiders** is a beautifully executed Trek-type game that immediately made all other programs in the same general classification obsolete.

The first thing everyone notices about this program for the Atari 400/800 computer systems is the riveting visuals. *Star Raiders,* however, is much more than just another pretty face. With its multitude of strategic and tactical options, this science fiction classic can keep several computer-gamers happily flying along the spacelanes for hours on end.

Yet *Star Raiders* is more than "just" a great game. It also has its share of historical importance. Its introduction sent shock waves throughout the electronic gaming world, serving notice that computer programs would no longer take a back seat to programmable cartridges in graphic excellence or action-oriented play.

HALL OF FAME





Pong
(Atari)

The doubters said there was no future in the coin operated arcades for the new-fangled videogames. **Pong** proved them wrong. This ultra-simple version of video tennis, designed by Atari founder Nolan Bushnell, proved incredibly fascinating to a pinball-weary public when placed in taverns and other such establishments.

Pong may look crude to us today, in 1982, but the concepts it introduced were bold and original a decade ago. The idea of moving a vertically mobile on-screen bat with a paddle controller formed the basis for hundreds of subsequent videogames.

Pong is also worthy of inclusion in the Videogame Hall of Fame because of the entertainment revolution it embodies. Before *Pong*, videogames could not really have been said to exist. Its popularity opened the door to the introduction of more and more videogames, eventually leading to the popularity of such games both at home and in commercial amusement centers. And make no mistake, it was the arrival on the scene of videogames that transformed the arcades from seedy, ill-lit dens into the comfortable family entertainment centers of today.

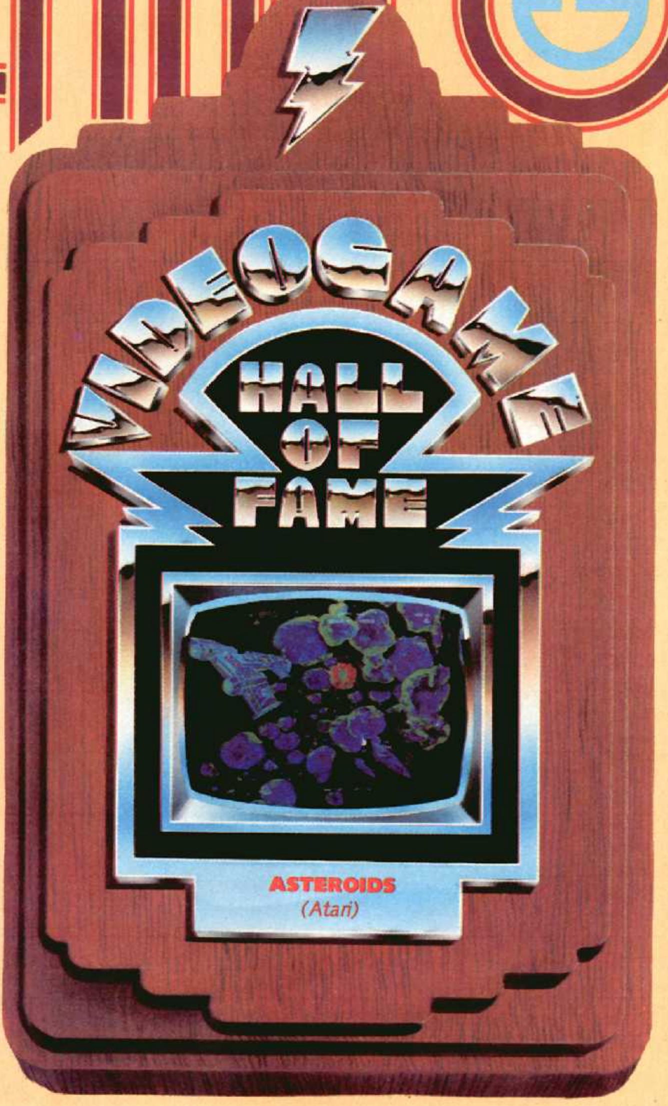
Space Invaders
(Taito)

Space Invaders, invented in 1978, proved the biggest arrival from the Orient since Godzilla. It broke the ball-and-paddle game mold forever by offering arcaders an incredible new kind of action — a target game in which the targets could and did fire back!

Space Invaders introduced a play-mechanic that is still the most copied in the videogame world. The idea of the arcader manipulating a horizontally mobile cannon can be found in numerous other videogames, from **Centipede** to **Sneakers.** And, *Space Invaders* is the most relentlessly imitated and copied videogame creation in the world. You can't walk into an arcade in America and not find at least one example of the invasion game genre spawned by this landmark title.

Space Invaders, itself, has proven irresistibly popular in every possible electronic game format. Its fans can enjoy the struggle to defeat the marching alien horde by playing *Space Invaders* as a hand-held, a tabletop unit, a home videogame, a microcomputer program, a coin-op machine or even as a watch or a pocket calculator. *Space Invaders* has penetrated the fabric of our society

HALL OF FAME



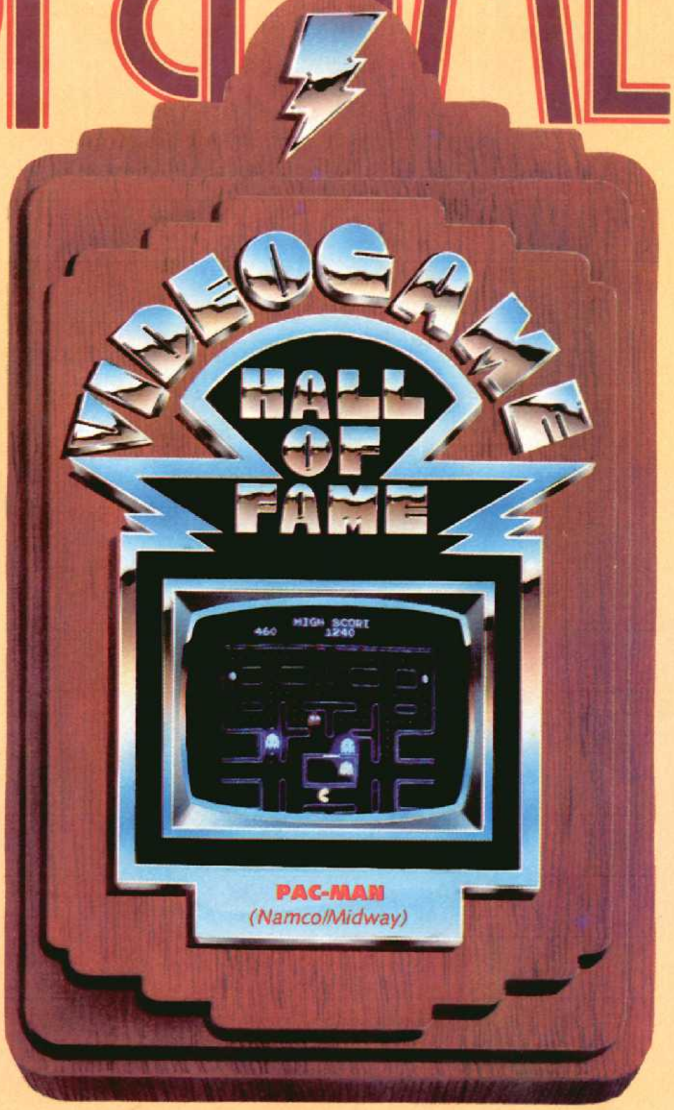
Asteroids

(Atari)

When **Asteroids** supplanted **Space Invaders** at the top of the coin-op popularity chart in 1980, it signalled the dawn of a new era of creativity within the world of videogames. *Space Invaders* broke the old restraints, but the highly patterned nature of its play-mechanic threatened to set up a new set of rules that would've proven very nearly as restrictive. By departing so completely from the *Space Invaders* success formula of the horizontally mobile cannon firing upward at advancing targets, *Asteroids* showed manufacturers that electronic gamers were appreciative of new ideas and didn't want endless rehashes of the same game.

The speed and unpredictability of *Asteroids* has made it a classic in its original quadrascan arcade configuration. The game has also proven a winner as a hand-held, a microcomputer program and a home programmable videogame. Succeeded in the market by the current **Asteroids Deluxe,** the original version is still seen here and there, one of the sternest challenges to the ability and stamina of coin-oppers.

Americans aren't the only ones who love *Asteroids.* An Atari tournament held in 1981 drew entrants from many foreign nations anxious to show their prowess.



Pac-Man

(Namco/Midway)

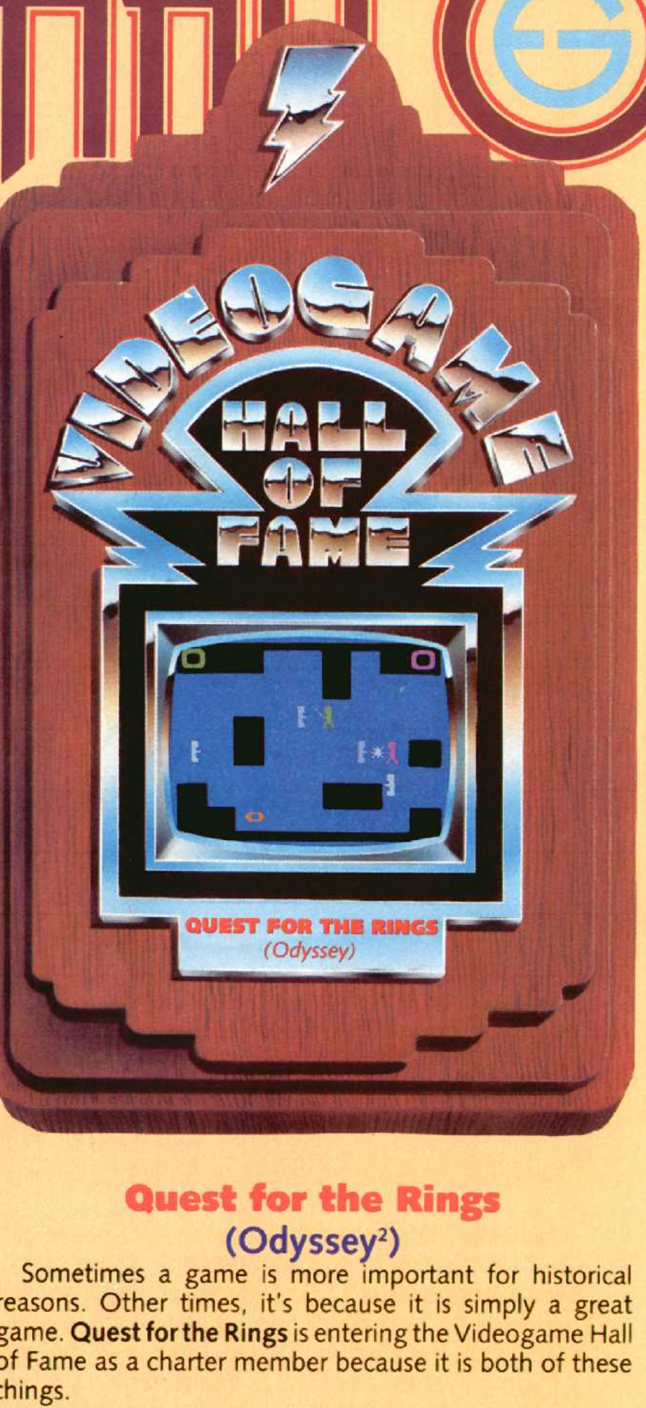
Pac-Man didn't introduce the idea of a maze or even use it for the first time in an electronic game. What this mega-hit *did* do was incorporate the strategic possibilities suggested by a labyrinth into an overall scheme of play better than any electronic maze game ever designed.

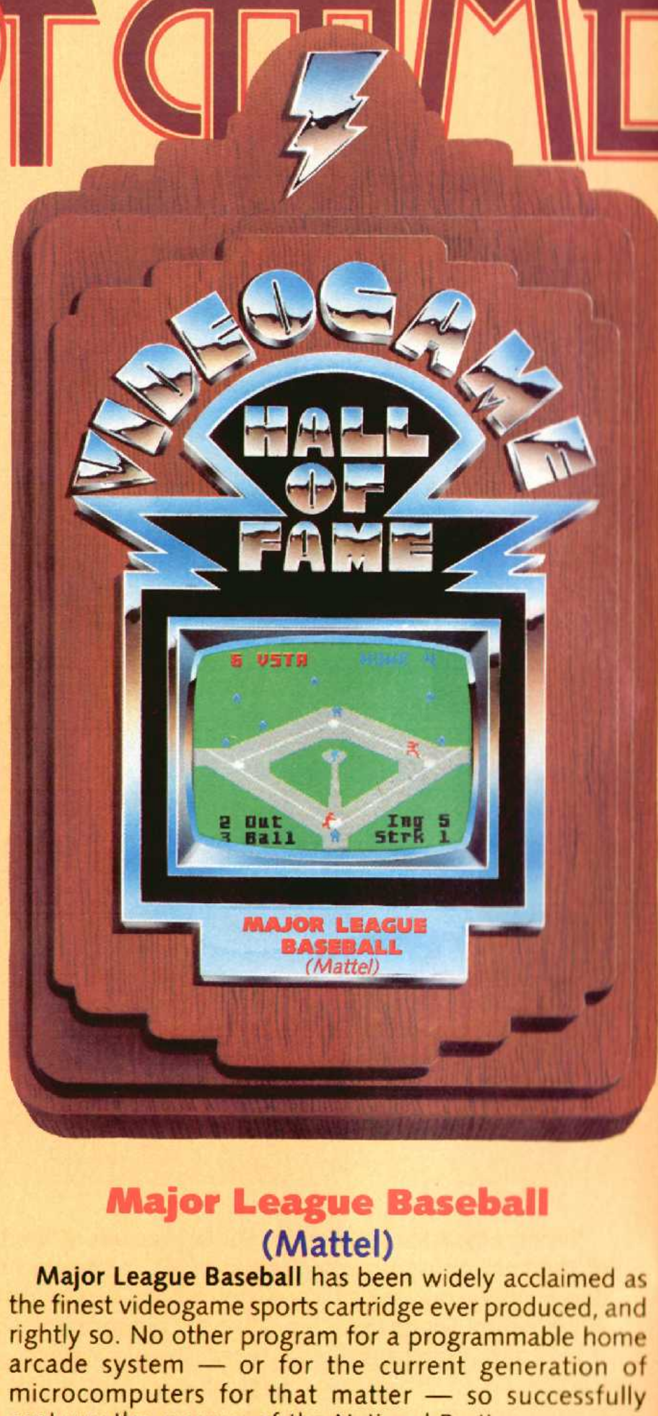
The maze-chase format is as brilliant as it is simple. The idea of including point-scoring and a game of tag that go on simultaneously produces a richly complex contest that is, at the same time, one of the easiest of the major videogames to learn how to play.

Another reason to salute *Pac-Man* is that it is the game that, more than any other, has brought women into the arcade revolution. Its charming graphics, jolly tunes and generally light-hearted approach to gaming have provided an introduction to the hobby of electronic gaming for millions of female players who might not have bothered otherwise.

Finally, *Pac-Man* is the game which proved conclusively to all but the most thick-headed that there's more to videogames than a simple challenge to hand-eye coordination. The many words *Pac-Man* has generated about its near-mystical patterns have proved that the arcading challenge is mental as well as physical.

HALL OF FAME





Quest for the Rings

(Odyssey^2)

Sometimes a game is more important for historical reasons. Other times, it's because it is simply a great game. **Quest for the Rings** is entering the Videogame Hall of Fame as a charter member because it is both of these things.

It is certainly of seminal importance in the history of videogames. For the first time, a single design blended elements of both the boardgame and the videogame in one title. By taking some of the burden for movement and record-keeping off the computer and assigning it to the human participants, designers Averitt and Lehner create a contest with much more scope and depth than the typical videogame cartridge.

Yet *Quest for the Rings* also shines as a game. Its clever arrangement, whereby the two human players must team up to accomplish the common goal of collecting all the rings instead of competing against each other gives this a decidedly different flavor.

Even the instruction manual for *Quest* is noteworthy. It sets forth the rules and nuances so clearly, that a game that could've seemed forbiddingly complex is instead easy to learn and play. A triumph of the first magnitude.

Major League Baseball

(Mattel)

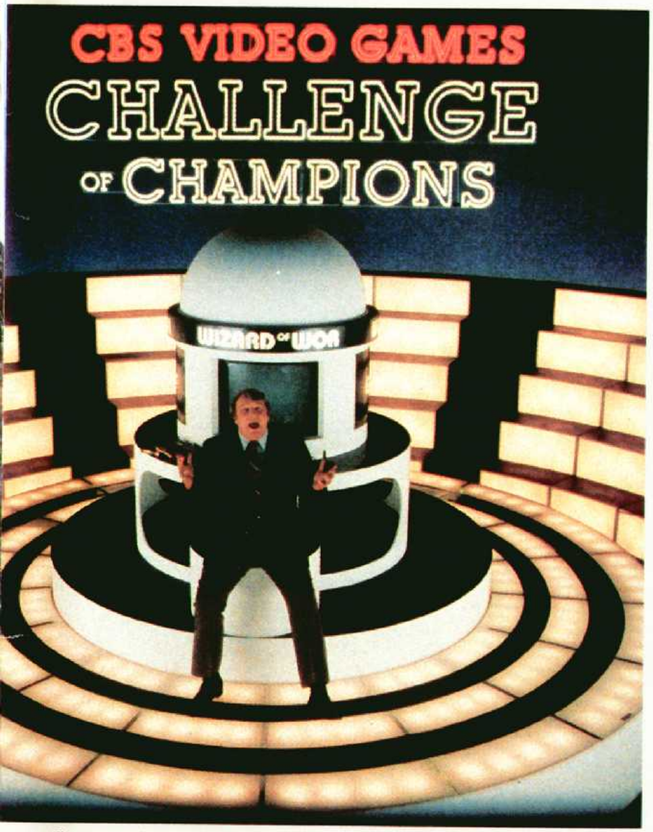
Major League Baseball has been widely acclaimed as the finest videogame sports cartridge ever produced, and rightly so. No other program for a programmable home arcade system — or for the current generation of microcomputers for that matter — so successfully captures the essence of the National Pastime.

Every important phase of real-life baseball is reflected in this stunning design. Gamers have come to expect a detailed pitching routine in electronic baseball games, but the inclusion of finely detailed fielding, running and hitting in the same cartridge is a feat no other simulator of sporting events has yet proved able to top.

And then there is the eye-popping graphic treatment. *Major League Baseball* broke exciting new ground with its high-resolution visuals when it first reached market as one of the original cartridge releases for the then-new Intellivision system. It has rarely, if ever, been surpassed since. That's quite a feat in a field in which technology seems to make breakthroughs once an hour.

Major League Baseball belongs in the Videogame Hall of Fame because it is, quite simply, the best of its type. Play ball!

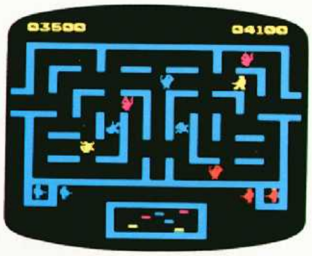
Winning at 'Wizard of Wor' and 'Gorf.' By John Madden.



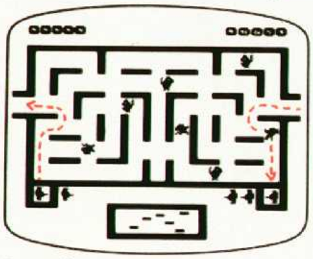
In our first Challenge of Champions, Ray Johnson of Los Angeles defeated Tony Sarkis of New York and David Hayes, a student at Cal Tech, defeated Brian Anderson, a student at MIT.

As the sportscaster for CBS Video Games, I get a chance to watch some of the best players in the country in the "Challenge of Champions."

Here are some of their winning strategies.



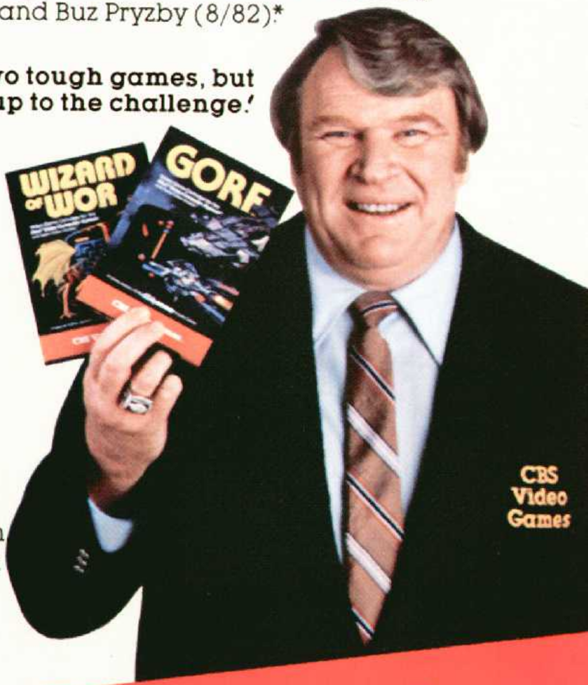
Wizard of Wor™: You start with three worriors. The object of this game is to defeat the Wizard, his henchmen and your opponent. This is a game you can play alone, or two can play simultaneously. When two play, you have to worry about getting zapped by your opponent as well as the Wizard, and his gang.



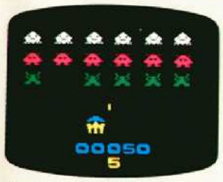
Here's an interesting move you might want to try. Get out into the maze fast, zip out of the escape door, come back in through the opposite side. If you're quick enough, you'll be in perfect position to blitz your opponent's three worriors before they can score any points. The ultimate shutout.

Another variation is to work together. Make a pact not to hit each other (accidents do happen, of course) and go for the record score: 99,500 by Frank Merollo (10/82) and Buz Pryzby (8/82).*

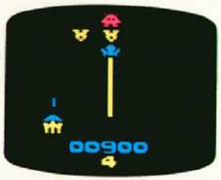
'These are two tough games, but I know you're up to the challenge.'



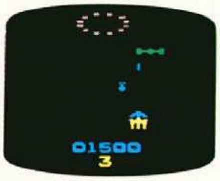
Gorf™ is four boards in one game. Your father will enjoy this game because with a little luck, he'll be able to go through the four boards a couple of times, but after the third level it starts to get faster…and faster.



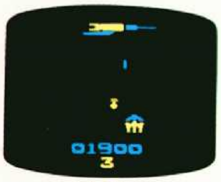
Coaching tips: patience



Stick & move



Get position



Hit it high

That's when you separate the players from the parents. You start out aggressively and after 10,000 points the bombs and torpedoes start to come hot and heavy, so be prepared to change to a defensive game plan.

The record high score is still 32,700 by Horace Eckerstrom (9/82),* which gives you some idea of how hard this game is.

Both Wizard of Wor and Gorf are made for the Atari® 2600 System.™ (Look for Intellivision® versions soon.) They're really tough, and the more you play them, the more you'll like them.

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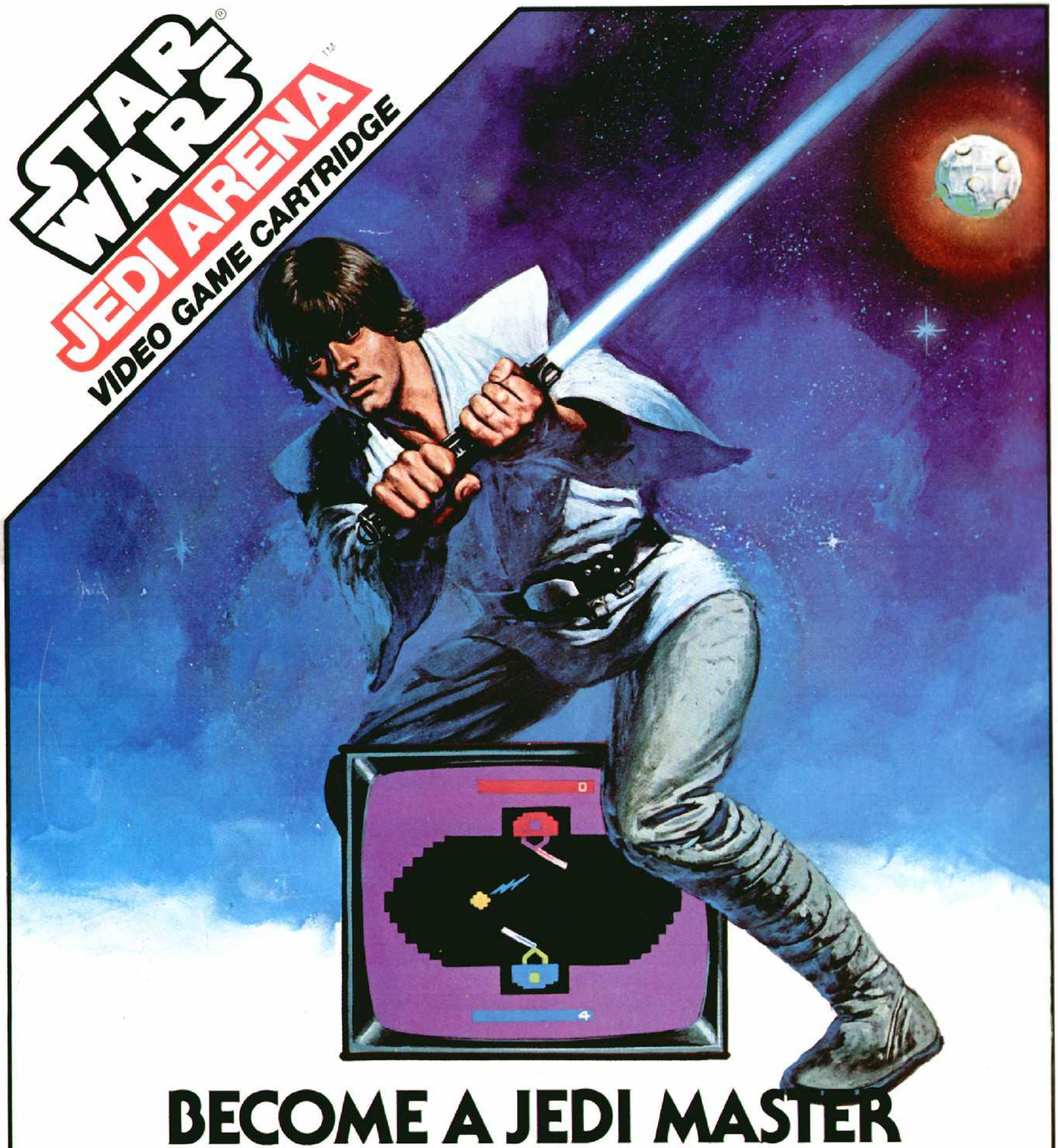
*High scores as of this printing.

CBS Video Games

Are you up to the challenge?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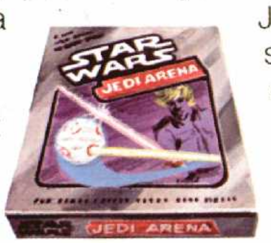
STAR WARS
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